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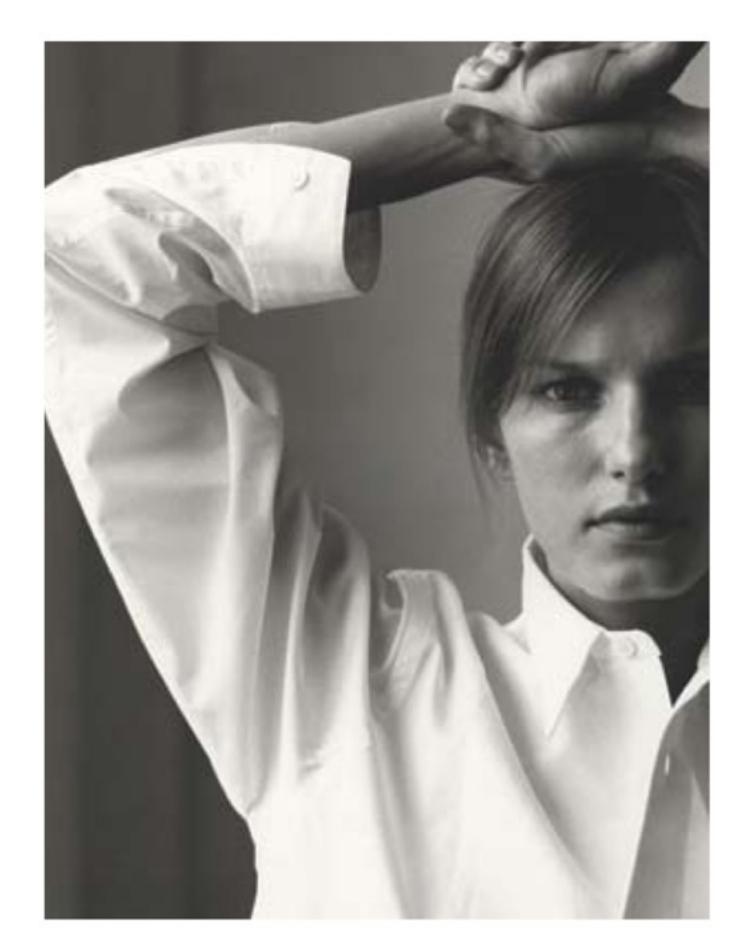
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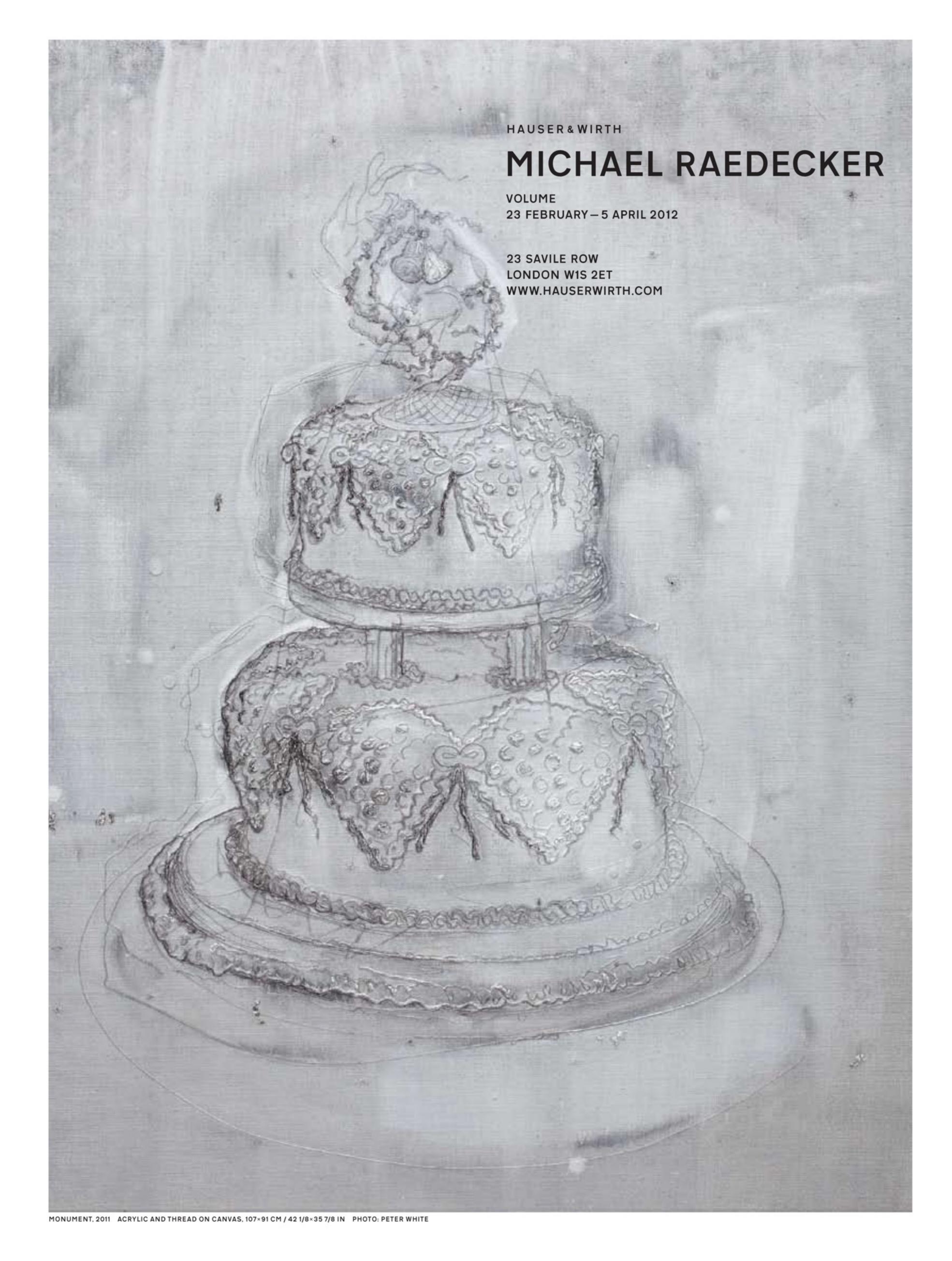
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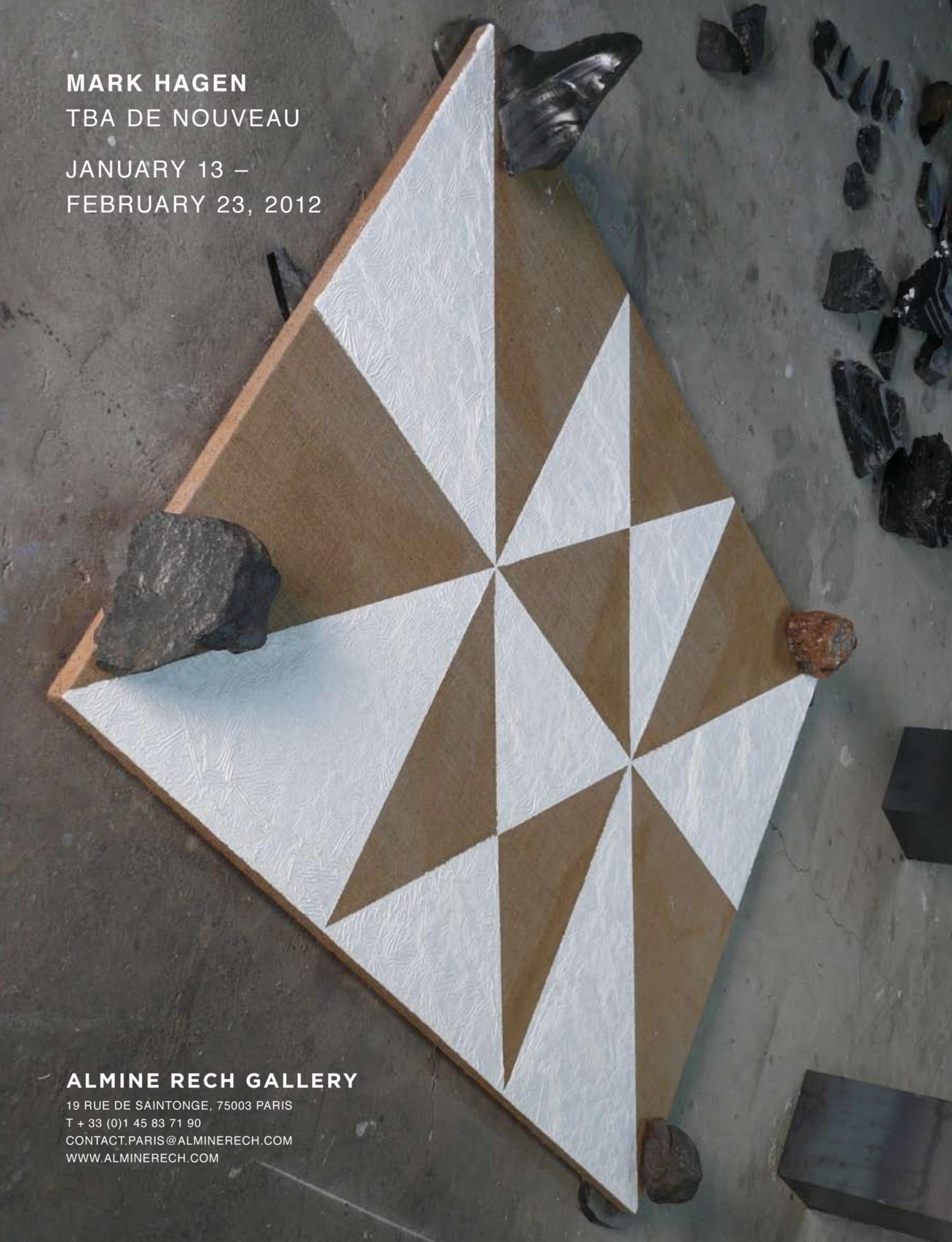


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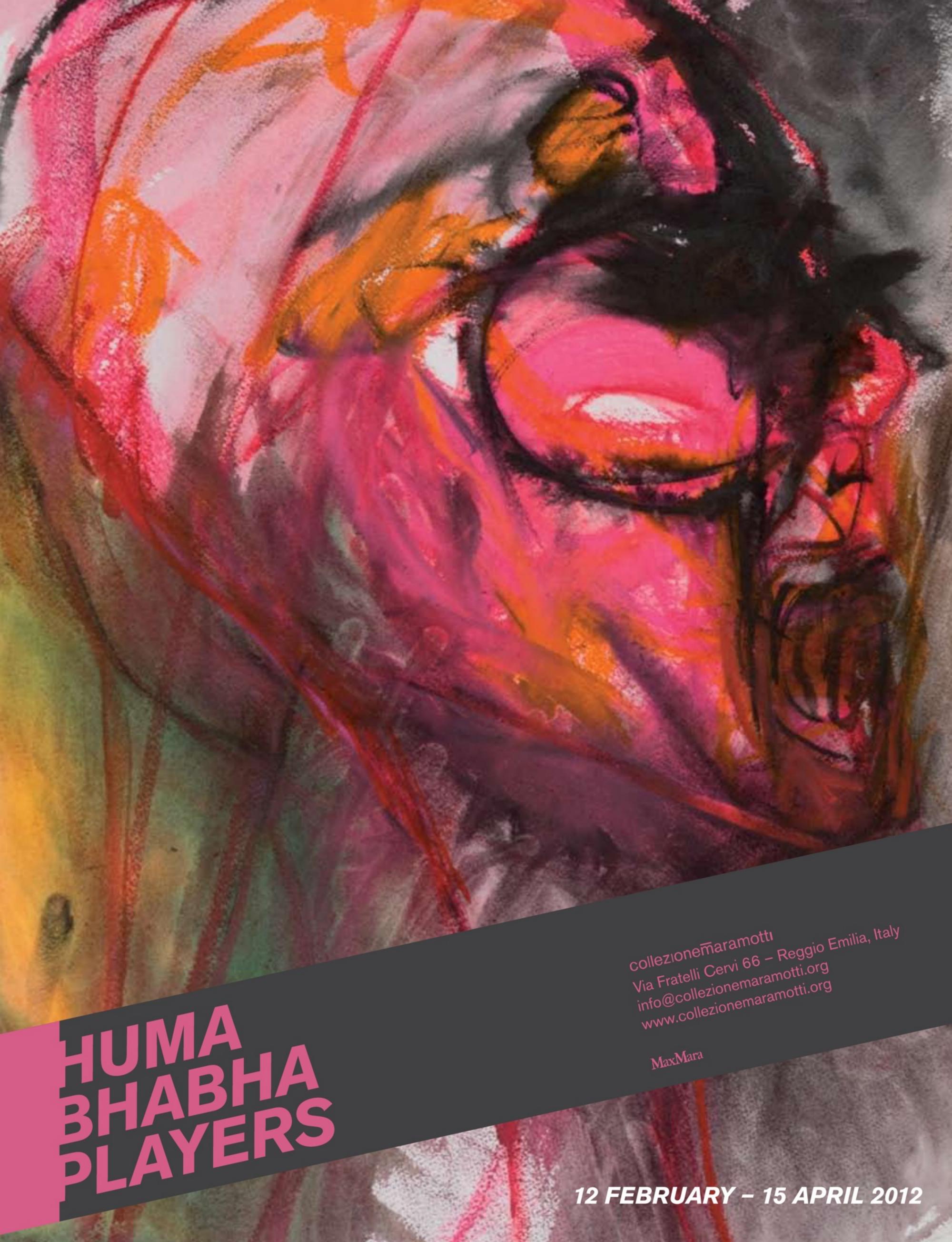
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On the cover Theaster Gates

photographed by Tim Gutt

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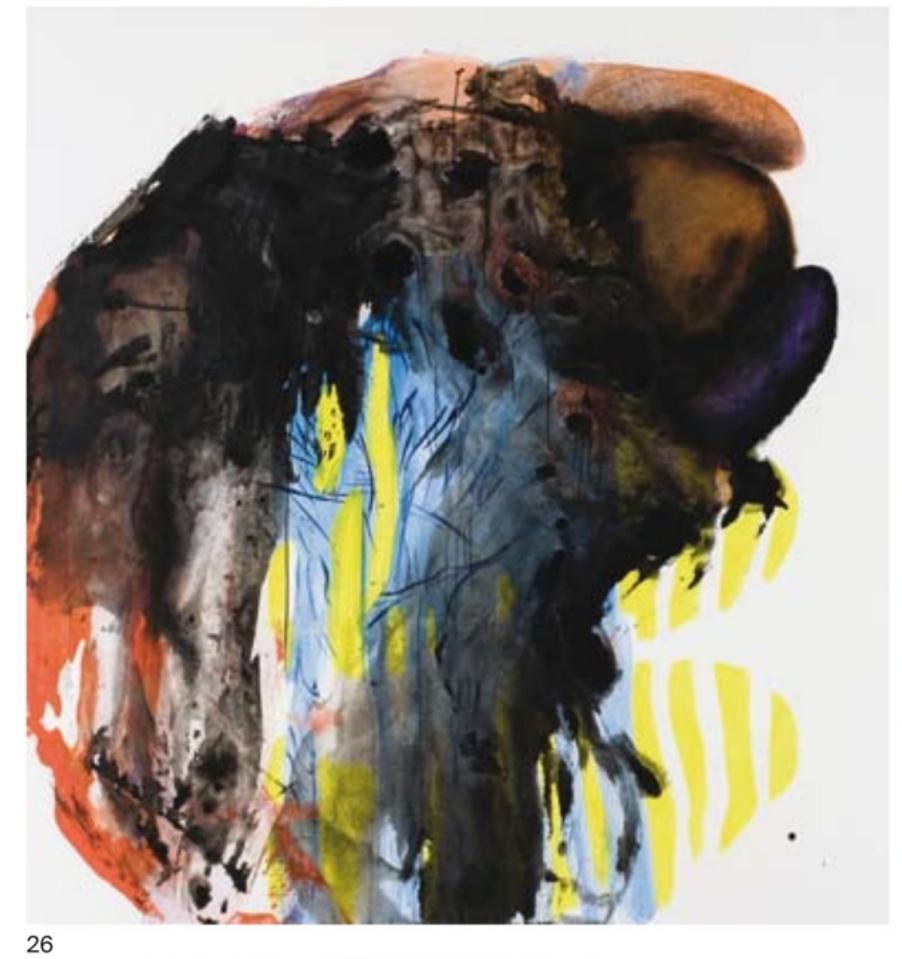
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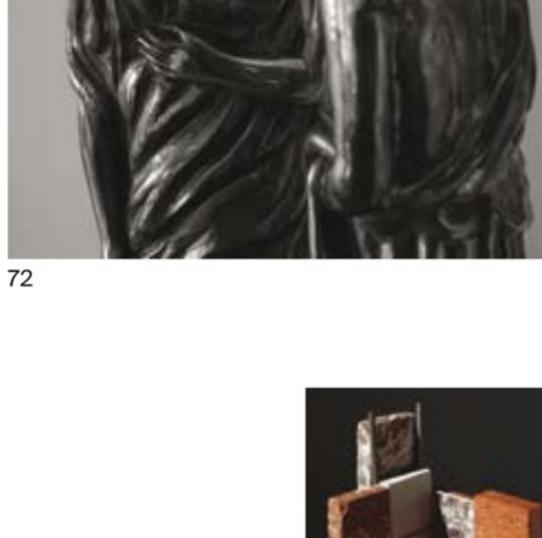




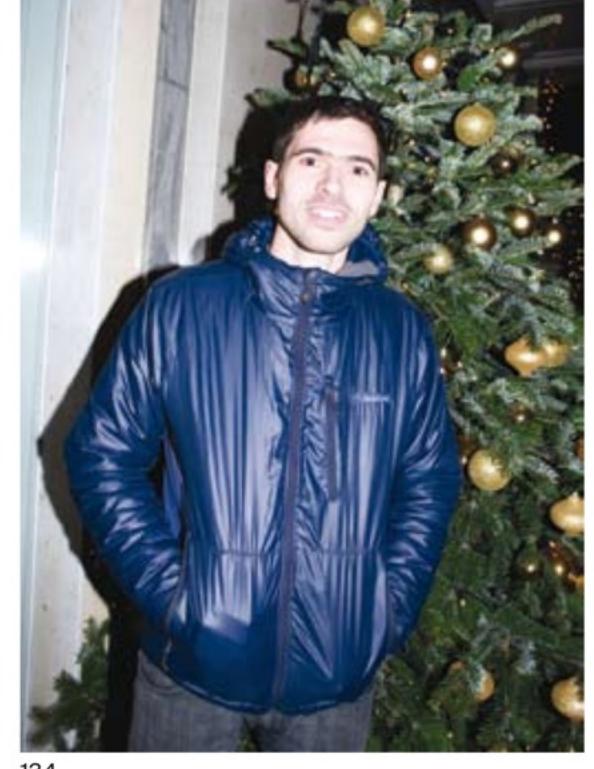














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## Contributors

#### Bruno Mansoulié

is a senior physicist at France's atomic energy commission, the CEA. He works at the CERN Large Hadron Collider as a member of Atlas, one of the largest collaborations, and is currently involved in the search for the Higgs boson, the hypothetical massive elementary particle. He likes to make his field known to a wide audience, which involves giving conferences or speaking in the media as much as possible. He recently participated in the exhibition Mathematics: A Beautiful Elsewhere at the Cartier Foundation, Paris. This month he is in conversation with artist Heidi Specker. Though it is now a bit old, for further reading he suggests Paul Davies's About Time (1995) and a browse through the CERN and Atlas websites: www.cern.ch and www.atlas.ch.

#### **Tim Cresswell**

is professor of human geography at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is a cultural geographer whose work inhabits the borderlands of the humanities and the social sciences. He is the author or editor of eight books, including Place: A Short Introduction (2004) and On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World (2006). Tim is also a practising poet, published in magazines such as The Rialto, The North and Poetry Wales. His poetic practice is connected to his work as a geographer, grappling with issues of belonging, travel and placelessness in a different register. This month he **responds** to Alex Hartley's Nowhereisland project. For further reading on magic and space, Tim recommends Marcel Mauss's A General Theory of Magic (1902); for more on moving rocks and landscape, try Doreen Massey's 2006 paper 'Landscape as a Provocation: Reflections of Moving Mountains' in the Journal of Material Culture (11/1-2: 33-48); and for the intersection of art, philosophy and geography, there's Edward Casey's Earth-Mapping: Artists Reshaping Landscape (2005).

#### Laura Oldfield Ford

is an artist based in London. Her work, influenced by the aesthetics of both punk and rave culture, investigates the urban realm particularly its forgotten, liminal areas - and the stories of the people who inhabit it. She has a solo show, Transmissions from a Discarded Future, at Hales Gallery, London, to 14 January, and her work is included in There Is a Place... at New Art Gallery Walsall from 20 January and Desire Paths at Caja Madrid, Barcelona, in September. This month she responds to ArtReview's reviews marathon of London galleries. For **further reading** see the artist's Savage Messiah zine, recently collected and published by Verso, and the blog she maintains at lauraoldfieldford.blogspot.com

#### **Tim Gutt**

is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Arts in the Netherlands. He lives and works in London. His collaborations with his wife, the set designer Shona Heath, have appeared in the pages of POP and British Vogue and were on show in the travelling Lady Dior: As Seen By exhibition last year. Gutt contributes regularly to Wallpaper\*, 032c, French Vogue and Fantastic Man. This month he photographs Theaster Gates for ArtReview's cover story. He is influenced by a conceptual approach to photography that has seen him undertake an expanding body of work charting some the most prominent contemporary artists and artworld figures.

#### Siona Wilson

is a New York-based academic and writer. She is currently completing a monographic book on the relationship between sexual politics, art and the question of avant-gardism in 1970s Britain. Examples of her scholarly writing on contemporary art and the 'sex war' on terror, contemporary photography and experimental film can be found in *Art History*, *Oxford Art Journal*, *Parallax* and *Women's Studies Quarterly*. This month she **reviews** Uta Barth at Tanya Bonakdar, New York. For **further reading** she recommends the 2010 exhibition catalogue *Uta Barth: The Long Now* and the 2004 Phaidon catalogue raisonné *Uta Barth*.







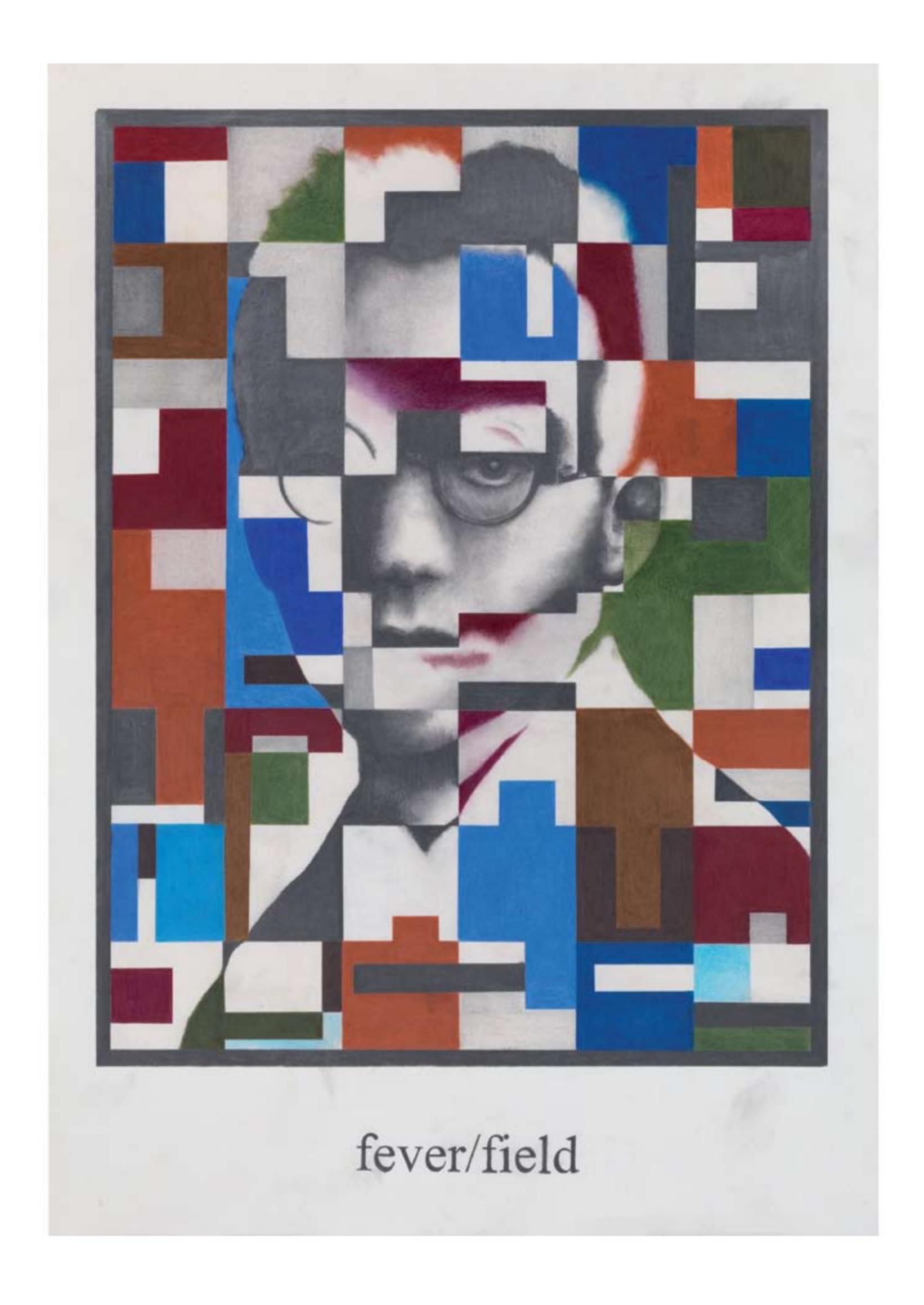




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## Dictionary



Nabokov, Vladimir (1899–1977). Lepidopterist. Butterflies are a common art trope and beauty locus, and function as a coded trope vehicle locus for an elevated symmetry contemplation validation locus that merges the meditativereligious. Nabokov did not believe that an understanding of genetics was necessary to distinguish species of insects, and relied on microscopic comparison of their genitalia (as was traditional practice for lepidopterists at the time). The Harvard Museum of Natural History contains Nabokov's 'genitalia cabinet', comprising his collection of male blue butterfly genitalia. Nabokov's own genitalia, including his locus scrotum (situated in the perineum locus between his penis and anus) were cremated with him. See **butterfly in art, cabinet** in art, genitals in art, anus in art, dildo in anus.

naive conceptual art Locus term applied to conceptual art that lacks conventional skill in usual conceptual art locus validation tropes. The term 'primitive' is used more or less synonymously with 'naive'. Other terms used are 'folk', 'popular' or 'Sunday conceptual artist'.

Nazi art Driving directions from Weimar to Buchenwald concentration camp are: 1) Head northwest on Sophienstiftsplatz/ L2161 toward Heinrich-Heine-Straße. Continue to follow L2161 (600 m). 2) Turn right onto Fuldaer Str. (1.4 km). 3) Turn left onto Ernst-Thälmann-Straße (48 m). 4) Continue onto Ettersburger Str. (3.2 km). 5) Slight left onto Blutstraße (4.9 km). 6) Turn right onto Buchenwald (240 m). Total 10.3 km. 14 mins. Fuel cost: €1.96. These directions are for planning purposes only. You may find that construction projects, traffic, weather or other events may cause conditions to differ from the map results, and you should plan your route accordingly. You must obey all signs or notices regarding your route. Nazi art may be situated in the general history of art. Weimar was where Goethe and Schiller developed the literary movement known as Weimar Classicism. The Bauhaus movement originated in Weimar. It was founded by Walter Gropius. Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Oskar Schlemmer and Lyonel Feininger taught in Weimar's Bauhaus school. Although not an extermination camp like Auschwitz-Birkenau or Treblinka, at least 56,000 Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, political prisoners and prisoners of war were starved, tortured or worked to death as slaves in Buchenwald.

neo- Common prefix for new art. See Neolithic art.

Neolithic art Many Neolithic cultures produced Neolithic art. **niello** A black alloy used as an inlay when decorating gold or silver plate.

Nigerian Market Literature Also known as Onitsha Market Literature. Popular Nigerian pamphlet publications produced during the 1950s and 60s, and characterised by nonstandard English usage (pidgin and creole) and romantically excitable plotlines. The locus creation of an oral culture coming to terms with literacy and modernisation. Some authorities are puzzled as to why this cultural form, which in many respects is the literary equivalent of popular African photography, has lacked critical attention. It is argued that this raises determining locus multiplicity questions about the relative racism locus of the contemporary fine-art locus (and its plethora of exhibitions and publications about popular African photography), in distinction to that of contemporary literature - literature being less fascinated by the irony variants so beloved by the contemporary fine-art world.

**nihilism** Nihilism in contemporary art has now been overcome by many forms of supermanic, often brilliant mythopoeia.

noncompliance locus affect Increasing locus tendency of commercial (and even some important public) galleries to delist critics from receiving information (or subtly to withhold cooperation) in instances where a critic has dared exercise too much critical independence – often by not simply credulously rewriting the dim, fatuous or stupid press release issued to him or her by the gallery.

number statistic locus (Tate) Approximately 1,300 various directors, curators, administrative staff, publishing staff, handlers, cleaners, caterers and gardeners are directly employed by Tate, and around 3,100 artists are represented in the Tate collection (source: Tate press office, 2010). This creates a low staff-to-artist ratio. In the context of the current reductive fiscal cuts locus, some authorities believe efficiencies could be achieved if all Tate collection artists were compelled to reside in the Tate galleries, where they could be awakened, bathed (including being carried to, placed upon and taken off the toilet after voiding), fed in communal areas and then made to work in the immediate areas in which they are due to exhibit.

#### **NEAL BROWN**

Future Greats 2011: SUSANNE BURNER selected by Heidi Specker



Future Greats 2011: HELEN MARTEN selected by Beatrix Ruf









selected by Kathy Noble ATKINS Future Greats 2011: ED

Future Greats 2011: TREVOR PAGLEN selected by Tyler Coburn

## Art's New Wave: Future Greats 2012

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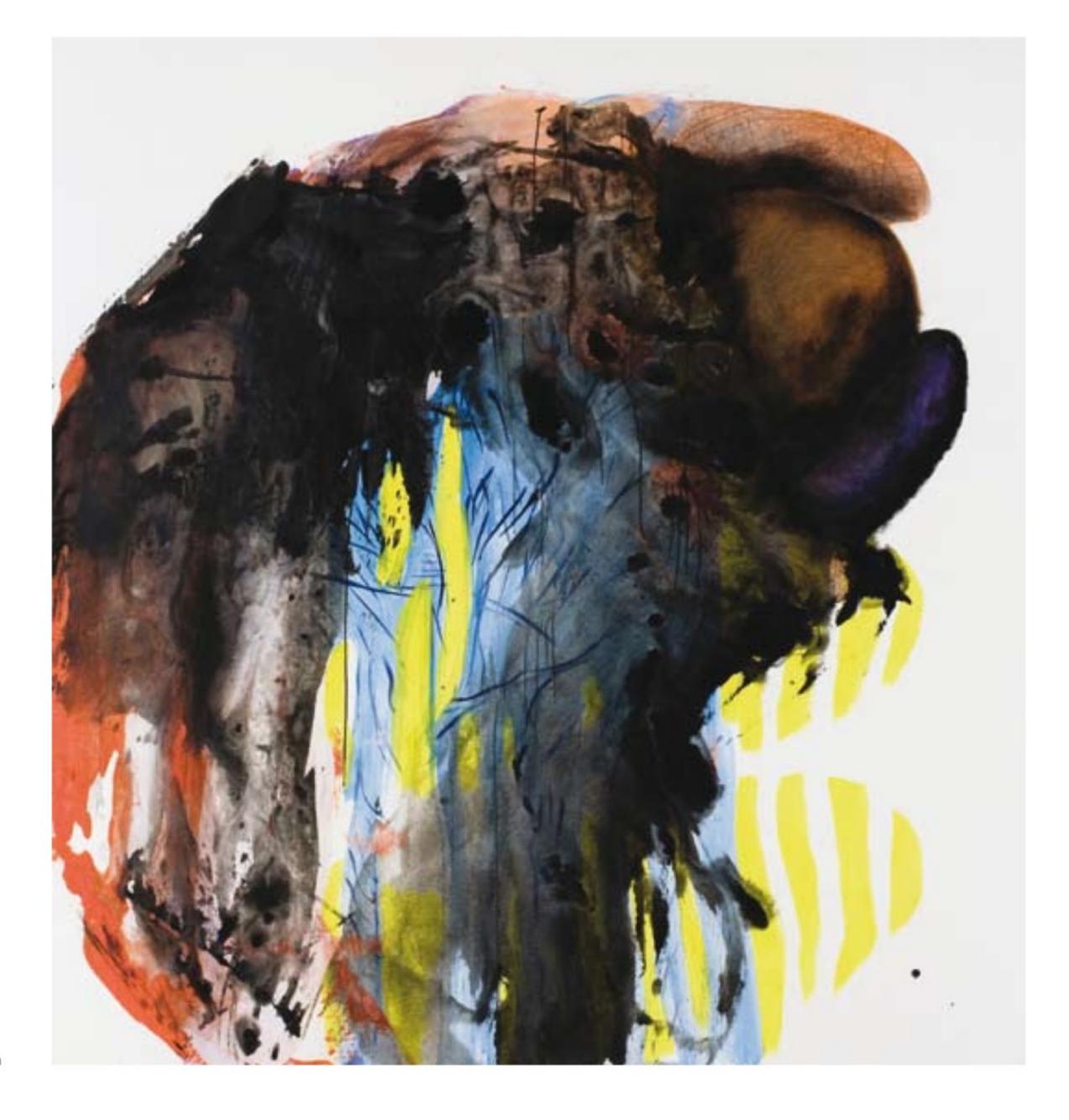
Previewed: **Charline von Heyl**, Tate Liverpool, 24 February – 27 May, www.tate.org.uk / **The Ungovernables**, New Museum, New York, 15 February – 22 April, www.newmuseum.org / **Karlheinz Weinberger**, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel, 21 January – 15 April, www.kunstmuseumbasel. ch / **Michael Snow**, Secession, Vienna, 23 February – 15 April, www.secession.at / **Chantal Akerman**, MuHKA, Antwerp, 10 February – 20 May, www.muhka.be / **Marianne Vitale**, Zach Feuer, 19 January – 18 February, www.zachfeuer.com / **Edgar Leciejewski**, Parrotta, Stuttgart, 3 February – 10 March, www.parrotta.de / **Pia Rönicke**, GB Agency, Paris, 6 January – 17 February, www.gbagency.fr / **Marrakech Biennale**, 29 February – 3 June, www.higheratlas.org

NOW SE This

f the epitome of style in abstract painting today is no style at all - to be multiple, to reinvent the wheel (or the grid, or the gestural signature) on a daily basis - then Charline von **Heyl** is as stylish as they come. The German-born, New York-based painter confects spills, geometry, smeary lithography, featherlight calligraphic dashes and whatever else crosses her brainpan that day, so long as the results don't resemble yesterday's. Of course, abandon a recognisable look and you can wait until your early fifties for Tate to notice you, but it will have been worth it for the rest of us. Expect its 42 paintings and numerous works on paper, dating from 1990 to 2011, to follow various sumptuous routes to von Heyl's ideal destination, namely: 'when you can't stop looking because there is something that you want to find out, that you want to understand...

Good paintings have this tantalizing quality. And once you turn around, you absolutely cannot recapture them. They leave a hole in the mind, a longing.'

Unhurried but rewarding careers of this type are, perhaps, an implicit argument against projects like the New Museum's triennial 'snapshot' of young art practice, now on its second outing, under the heading **The Ungovernables**. The first time around, the institution survived a risky strategy of selecting only artists who were, as that show's title asserted, *Younger Than Jesus*. (Younger than just over two thousand, you might say, though they meant thirty-three.) This time, the criteria have been relaxed slightly: included artists were born as far back as 1973. The determinedly internationalist new curator, Eungie Joo, has selected figures including Danh Vo, Slavs and



Charline von Heyl
Lalo, 2008, acrylic on linen,
208 x 198 x 4 cm. © the artist.
Courtesy Capitain Petzel, Berlin



Julia Dault
(see The Ungovernables)
Untitled 17 (11:00 am - 4:00
pm, January 20, 2011), 2011
(installation view, Witte de With,
Rotterdam), Plexiglas, Formica,
Everlast boxing wraps, string,
dimensions variable.
Photo: Bob Goedewaagen.
Courtesy the artist

Tatars, Pratchaya Phinthong, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and a bunch of people who feel relatively under the radar. Hopefully, then, she's also figured out how to dodge the criticism levelled at the first show: that in focusing on visible youth, the triennial becomes merely a gallery-approved index of the currently cool and saleable.

Yesterday's youth has its fascinations too, as the ongoing interest in Karlheinz Weinberger confirms. Between the 1950s and 80s, the photographer documented his country's Americaobsessed subcultures ('Karlheinz Weinberger is Swiss??! You're kidding me' – John Waters) while working in Siemens's Zurich warehouse or collecting unemployment benefit, clandestinely publishing the photographs he took as a compensatory hobby in a magazine put out by an underground gay club. Recognition, first via the fashion world and then via the artworld, only reached him in the five years prior to his death in 2006, but it's unlikely to go into reverse now. Weinberger's affinities - for glistening ducktails, steel-studded leather, gleaming oversize belt buckles and the misty frissons of yearning in the eyes of would-be rebellious young people in one of the world's most buttoned-down countries - resonate moodily down the decades to our moment, when the notion of sustainable, mainstream-resisting subcultures has virtually vanished.

Karlheinz Weinberger Basel 1962, 1962. Courtesy the estate of Karlheinz Weinberger in care of Patrik Schedler, Zurich



#### BERLIN

I recently spent a long weekend in Kassel at the annual Dokfest (Documentary Film and Video Festival), where this year's participants included Candice Breitz, Christian Jankowski and Bjørn Melhus. In tandem with the festival's programme, the Kassel Kunstverein and the KulturBahnhof presented the exhibition Monitoring, with video installations and other works by artists such as Annika Larsson and Mathilde ter Heijne. A week later I found myself in Bremen, another German city that has a surprising amount to offer: for a start, there's the extensive exhibition Color in Flux at the Neues Museum Weserburg, with works by major artists (Gerhard Richter, Jackson Pollock, Karin Sander, Ai Weiwei) and younger artists (Rainer Splitt and Christine Würmell), all in a converted warehouse on the River Weser. A stone's throw away, at GAK (Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst), Cathy Wilkes was showing; in the esteemed Künstlerhaus there was an opening for a new installation by Lara Almarcegui. The next day I went to Barbara Claassen-Schmal's Galerie für Gegenwartskunst to see work by Korpys/ Löffler. But why, you might ask, am I writing all this in a column about Berlin?

Because the art scene in the German capital, with its ongoing hype, is constantly accused of making life hard for those in other German cities, to the extent that some have supposedly almost ceased to function. It's an accusation that's both fair and unfair. It's true that these days large numbers of artists seem to be moving to Berlin when they finish art school, leaving cities like Hamburg or Munich somewhat depleted. And it's no secret that in recent years numerous galleries originally based in Cologne, Dresden and Hamburg, for instance, have moved to Berlin. The reasons for this influx are selfevident: there is an international art community awaiting them - including top galleries, renowned exhibition institutions and a lively 'off-space' scene. Added to this, Berlin rents are still lower than in Bremen or even Munich, and restaurants and clubs are considerably cheaper than in Kassel or Hamburg. On the other hand, the pay for the jobs that less-than-big-name artists do to keep body and soul together is also considerably less than elsewhere in Germany.

But the fact is that the Berlin art hype radiates far beyond Berlin itself, benefiting other art scenes in Germany. This is a relatively small country, and it's no problem for the international art set to jet from Berlin to Cologne or Stuttgart to see exhibitions there, in the same way that I was able to get to Kassel and Bremen by train in just a few hours, for the same purpose. In fact, it's clear that in recent years many art scenes in Germany have pretty much recovered – Cologne and Düsseldorf are good examples of this. The art business in Germany is not what you would call centralised, thank God. You just have to keep looking around.

#### RAIMAR STANGE

27

translated from the German by Fiona Elliott



### NEW YORK

In a week last October when coverage of Occupy Wall Street went from 0 to 60 in a millisecond, the Metropolitan Opera announced that, after several financially trying years, it had balanced its budget and raised \$182 million in its recently concluded fiscal year - up 50 percent over its previous cycle. I love the Met. I went with my grandmother, continue to go regularly and still recall my parents, in my eyes dressed like a prince and princess, leaving for the opening of the new opera house at Lincoln Center in 1966. That evening's performance of Samuel Barber's Antony and Cleopatra signalled, along with the building anchoring the recently developed cultural acropolis on the West Side, the spirit of a city and of a nation then enjoying unimaginable and broad prosperity.

I want there to be a place for the Met today. That Met, even. But I wonder where the company's business model leads. The opera house's commitment to quality, the sheer number of productions it mounts each season and the massiveness of its theatre all make an expensive artform costlier still. Yet the company's budget is larger than the next eight largest American opera companies combined, a ratio similar to that of American defence spending vis-à-vis our perceived rivals. As the latter now seems designed to fulfil domestic political imperatives rather than to meet actual security threats, the former - despite the Met's commitment to quality - also signals the rise of the corporate behemoth that audiences expect to deliver spectacle. Any diminution is seen as a travesty, a betrayal, a vitiation of quality, a sign of failure.

Peter Gelb, who took over as general manager in 2006, has spent heavily on new productions to bring a sense of vibrancy to a place and artform considered old-fashioned by many. Increased audience attendance and soaring contributions speak for his success; but this strategy not only requires new spending to attract audiences and donors but also reinforces a reliance on big contributions. Like the advanced capitalist economy, it demands ever-increasing consumption, and behind that, an expanding general economy to bolster its donor base and endowment.

Meanwhile, the Met remains saddled with a \$41m debt and a recession-depleted investment account. The New York City Opera, once a more populist Lincoln Center alternative, has departed the complex in truly deep financial trouble and slashed its programming. Perhaps the real challenge facing the Met, and other seemingly too-big-to-fail institutions, is not how to muddle through in an era of stasis, but how to develop new models of quality and presentation for a time when constant growth is not only impossible but also becomes an aesthetic and financial dead end.

**JOSHUA MACK** 



Michael Snow Powers of Two, 2003, four transparent photographs, each 262 x 488 cm

Chantal Akerman image from *D'Est*, 1993, 25 monitors, colour, sound (48 speakers), 107 min. Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris

With today's artists returning to the recursive innovations of structuralist film, it's an opportune moment for a Michael Snow show. The Canadian filmmaker/photographer/painter/ musician, now in his early eighties, has a seemingly inexhaustible ability to rub formalist conceits against quotidian material: in Piano Sculpture (2009) he creates a dense auditory and spatial composition by surrounding the viewer with four projections from which issues a dense, layered four-part piano composition played by Snow. Expect, also, constructed meditations on looking at looking: in Paris de jugement Le and/or State of the Arts (2006), for instance, a photograph on canvas of four female nudes observing one of Cézanne's Bathers paintings teasingly layers systems of representation: a doubled presentation of a viewer's eye meeting nudes on canvas. Both worldly and rarefied, it's classically Snow.

Works like his 1967 Wavelength, a 45-minute zoom, were a formative influence on Chantal **Akerman**, who's finally in receipt of a retrospective: her early works, like the feature *Hotel Monterey* (1972), are indebted to Snow's durational bent. Akerman, though, was interested in both crowbarring open gaps in narrative and in using formalism (and slowness) as a vehicle for specific content. Her landmark three-and-a-quarter-hour Jeanne Dielman, 23, quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles (1975), which tracks the tedious day-today rhythms of a middle-aged widow - making beds, cooking, intermittent prostitution - has been acclaimed as one of the finest filmic contributions to feminism. (Marvellously, it recently inspired a YouTube 'cooking video' contest in tribute.) From the Other Side (2002), meanwhile, a documentary on Mexican immigration to the US, testifies to her enduring activist spirit; and when people talk about the contemporary novelty of artists migrating to cinema, Akerman's name ought to be mentioned straightaway.



ArtReview 29



Marianne Vitale

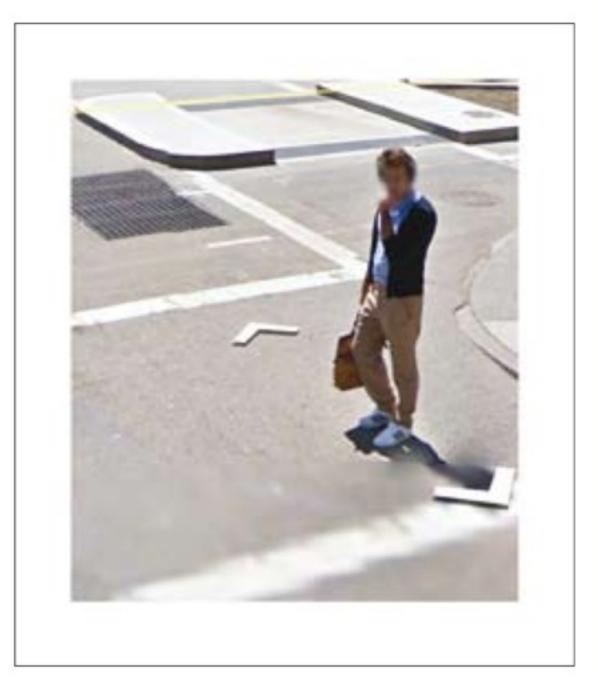
Jail, 2011, reclaimed lumber,

183 x 183 x 183 cm. Courtesy the artist and Zach Feuer, New York

Marianne Vitale was a standout in the last Whitney Biennial, not least for being the most noisily in-your-face entrant: her video Patron (2009), espousing her formless neomodernist philosophy of 'neutralism', found her barking a succession of orders to the viewer through the camera like a furious life coach-cum-Dadaist ("imagine your feet soaking in gopher urine", if you please). During the show's run, Vitale mounted a maritime-themed performance involving a gold-painted topless model, nets full of pungent fresh fish and the crew of a ship - one of whom, female, complained of failing to get the captain's attention because he preferred copulating with skate - before a smoke bomb went off, a punk song about oral sex was performed and the performance concluded in a camp musical routine. If this mostly filtered female disempowerment through the metaphor of being adrift, it also marked Vitale as an inventive, waspish figure to watch.

Edgar Leciejewski, at the other end of the sedateness-hysteria scale, engages with photographic categories, teasing emotive and/ or humanist content from supposedly cold formats, resisting their habitual aim of objectivity. He's isolated figures from Google Street Views, and his series Aves – involving scanographs of birds, their wings spread and folded – looks like an adjunct to ornithology but might be more accurately construed as an elusive form of metaphor-making: 'This is not about human fallibility', the Berlin-based artist has said. 'Imagine someone trying his best to fly by imitating the strokes of the wings of a dove with his arms

Edgar Leciejewski
302 West 22nd Street, New York
NY, United States, 2010,
colour print, 150 x 173 cm.
Courtesy Parrotta Contemporary
Art, Stuttgart & Berlin



### PARIS

To present the work of Présence Panchounette (PP) is no piece of cake. And perhaps it's even harder when you're talking about a group of artists from Bordeaux in a column from Paris. But in a way, this type of inconsistency is exactly in keeping with PP's style.

Legend has it that their first artistic action was writing 'Tout est comme avant' ('Everything is as it was before') on walls in Bordeaux a few months after the May 1968 revolution. Bordeaux is the most bourgeois and conventional city in France. And it was here, in that city's elegant eighteenth-century surrounds, that Présence Panchounette took the garden gnome and supersized it – the first artists to use it as the readymade of popular taste.

To get to the point quickly – 'quickly done, badly done', after PP's fashion – the group works with bad taste. Accordingly, those tyres with electric garlands and plastic flowers growing out of them became a must for the group 20 years before they became a must in all bohochic lofts. PP liked happenings and Y-fronts, mopeds and taxidermy: the rejects of good taste. PP championed 'idiot art'; they preferred 'Laurel and Hardy to Gilbert and George'. PP replaced wall labels with Post-its, and parodied, among other things, Picasso's *Tête de Taureau* (1942), replacing its bronze bicycle handlebars and seat with shabby plastic versions (*Remake Up*, 1986).

Influenced by Dadaism, Duchamp and the Situationists, PP were mostly just an enthusiastic bunch of pains in the ass. They teased Daniel Buren at the height of his acclaim by proposing to his gallery – Yvon Lambert – that its walls be repapered. To PP's eyes there was nothing neutral in Buren's stripes – they contrasted them with the faux-stone wallpaper they often used themselves, as if to challenge good taste with popular taste. 'What is intolerable about the vulgar is its innocence,' PP proclaimed.

The name Présence Panchounette says a lot about their work (or their mess): ironic, with an I-don't-care attitude, post-postmodern, post-whatever, really. It comes from *choune*, French slang, from the Aquitaine region, for vagina. As for Présence, it was a cliché of the late 1960s and 70s (much like the word 'passion' during the 80s).

'Success is our downfall', PP said, and they avoided the rewards of recognition, triumphantly disbanding in 1990. In 2008, the CAPC museum of Bordeaux proposed a PP retrospective, despite having snubbed them when they were active, and having been the butt of their jokes. PP accepted the invitation, but only on the condition that their work be located on 14 sites throughout the city, none of which were the museum.

There's a theory that art 'made in France' was in crisis between 1970 and 1990, but it seems to me that this was more an anarchist or postpunk refusal to sell out. It's an almost farcical self-destruction: preferring the rubbish bin to the museum.

MARIE DARRIEUSSECQ

Pia Rönicke Untitled, White Screen/After Eileen Gray's Block System, 2011, cotton paper and maplewood, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist, GB Agency, Paris, and Andersen's Contemporary, Copenhagen



**Batoul S'Himi** (see Marrakech Biennale) World's Pressure VI, 2009, aluminium pot. Collection Riad El-Fenn, Marrakech. Courtesy the artist and L'appartement 22, Rabat



and hands. May the inability to fly be conceived as failure? You might say that it was a failure, but of what exactly? If there is no prospect of success you can never fail.'

That Modernism didn't fly, finally, is the source of Pia Rönicke's interest in it, as is how its architectural legacies impact on the present. In her films, her sculptures and her collages fusing photography, clippings from magazines, drawings and comics, the Danish artist focuses on the negotiations necessary to harmonise utopianism with individuals: the film Zonen (2005), for example, involves conversations with architects about a venue originally intended for industry but since fluxing into a residential realm. The keynote, perhaps paradigmatically for contemporary artists interested in the last century's ideals, is a love of modern aesthetics coupled to a realisation that they're totally inhospitable to humans who might have to live with them.

head back to the tumbledown sixteenth-century

El Badi Palace in Marrakech. Most of its 360 rooms, once decorated with cedar, semiprecious stones, Sudanese gold and Italian marble, now lie in ruin; but the epic courtyard is the site for Higher Atlas, the visual-arts component - curated by Carson Chan and Nadim Samman - of the fourth Marrakech Biennale. Involving film and literature programmes as well as site-specific interventions by artists and architects, it's a culture-wide event - which is why the list of previous participants includes Richard E. Grant, Zadie Smith and John Boorman as well as Francis Alÿs, Tracey Emin and Yto Barrada, and why Alan Yentob is there curating a film programme. If that counts as one potential downside/distraction, there was, of course, also the matter of a terrorist bombing last year, not that there are many places one can now go to in order to be free of some kind of terror. But the exhibition itself has some potential to fascinate, it appears, and then there's this: in March, it's typically about 20 degrees Forget Modernism for now, then. Let's Fahrenheit warmer in Marrakech than it is in London. And London has no souks.:

### THE STRIP BY

ZEINA ABIRACHED (see overleaf)

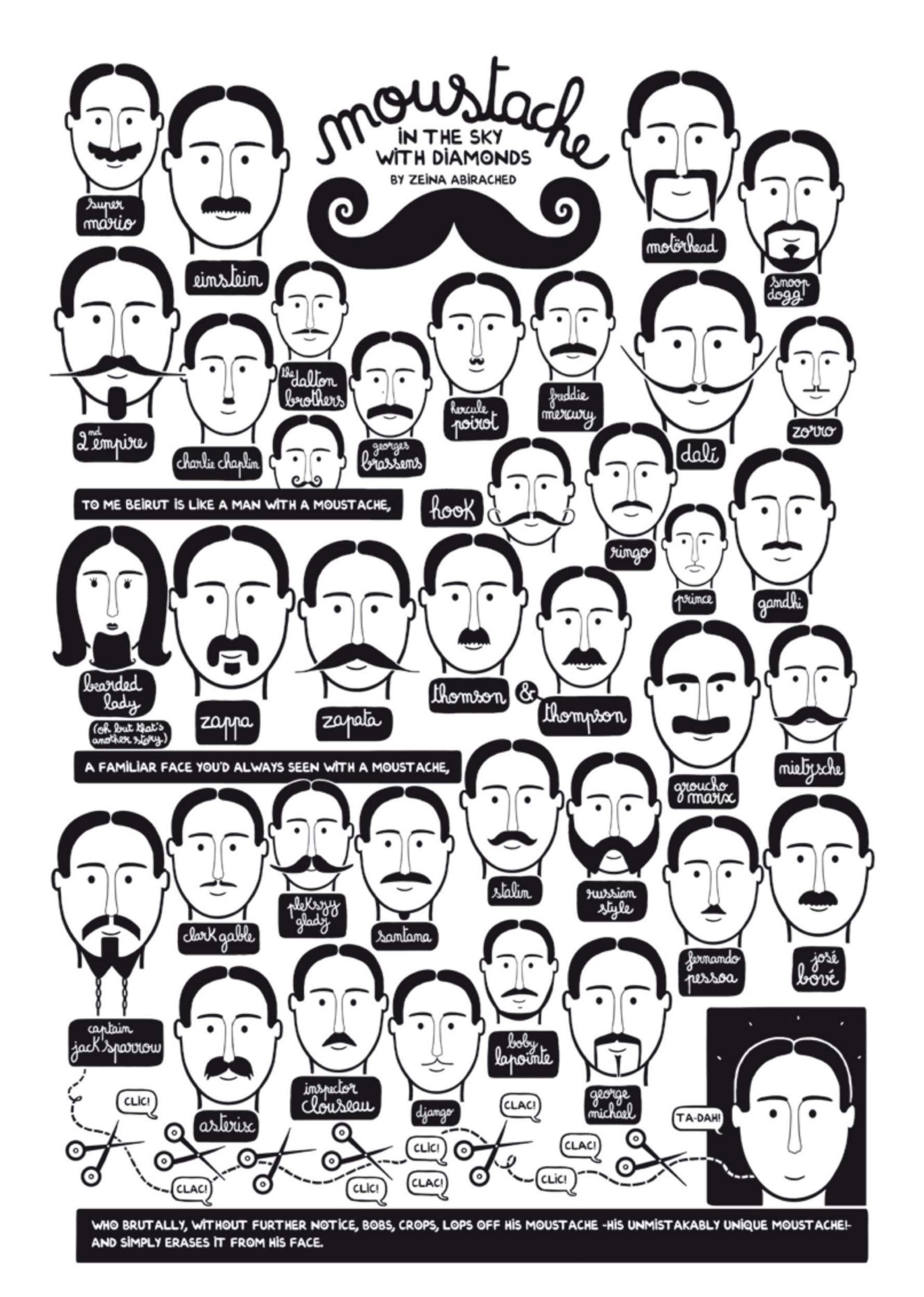
Faced with virtually no opportunities to get her personal comics published in Lebanon, Zeina Abirached came to Paris in 2004 and was signed up as the first author of a new publishing house, Editions Cambourakis. Abirached is still haunted by her birthplace, Beirut, which is as much a character as a location in her four acclaimed solo graphic narratives to date. Born in 1981, she grew up never knowing anything other than civil war, but despite the fact that her family lived close to the divided capital's contested demarcation border, she was somehow cocooned from it. "A whole network was organised by the adults to make things seem fairly normal to me. When we had to flee our home, my mother would pretend that we were going on a holiday. It was only after the war stopped that I realised what was really happening. It was only then that I discovered that Beirut was really big. The city had been cut in two, and in the eastern part the streets were divided by walls of sandbags; as a naive child I thought that all roads stopped there. When the rest of the city was opened up, I felt I was going into a foreign country."

From her training in Lebanon as a commercial designer, Abirached brought a striking, decorative approach to her first blackand-white comics in France in 2006. That same year, while exploring an online television news archive, Abirached came across a report about a 1984 bombing in Beirut that shocked her: "All of a sudden, my grandmother burst out of my computer screen. There she was, being interviewed and saying, 'I think we are still, perhaps, more or less safe here'. Her phrase questions the notion of space and territoriality, and sums up why many people stayed 'home' despite the danger. It became the opening sentence of my next graphic novel." In A Game for Swallows: To Die, To Leave, To Return, to be published in translation later this year by Lerner Books, Abirached lets us discover through her child-self's eyes how the people around her constructed a kind of security and normality in their cramped interiors, while in the background, largely unseen but ever-present, the war raged.

Impressions of today's transformed Beirut inform her new comic strip overleaf. "Many men used to proudly wear moustaches as part of their identity, but in the 1990s fashions changed and they vanished. Beirut has experienced something similar, from being beautiful in the 1970s, then destroyed in the 1980s, to being discovered in the 1990s and now rebuilt as a vertical city. Martyrs' Square was the lungs of the city, with its old souks. Now it no longer exists; you pass through an empty space that's replaced it, a parking lot between a few reconstructed buildings. It feels like the void left when a moustache is shaved off a face, a gap we can't help trying to fill, with the stories we were told about Beirut before the war. But it's too late."

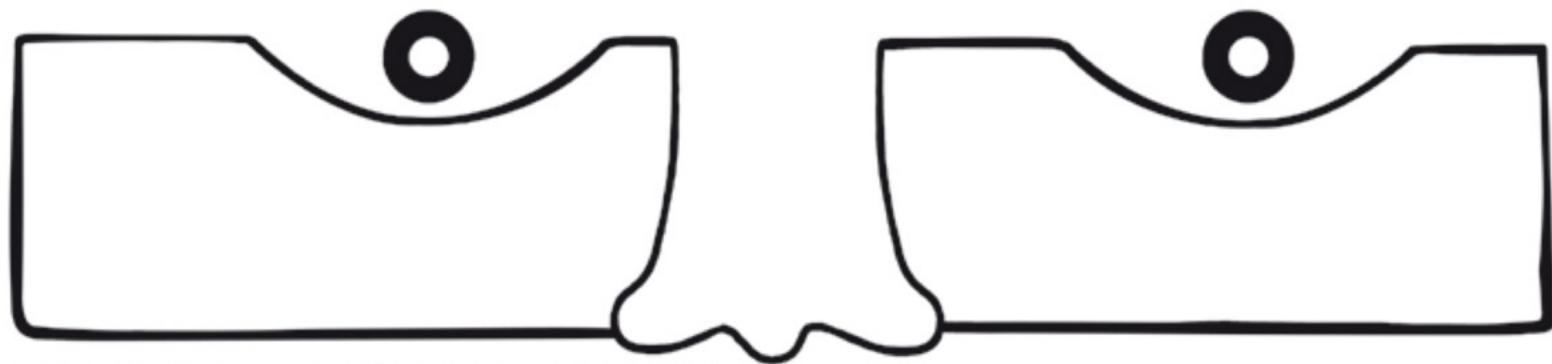
**PAUL GRAVETT** 

ArtReview 31



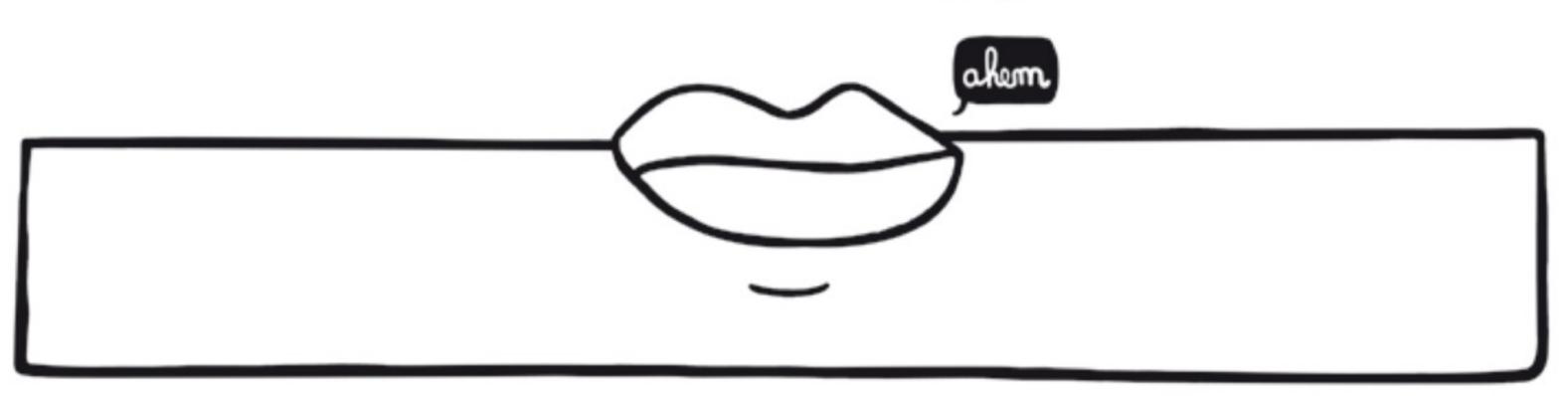
Moustache in the Sky with Diamonds, by Zeina Abirached

AND -ISN'T IT WEIRD!- YOU NEVER EVER GET USED TO THIS SUDDEN VOID BETWEEN LIPS AND NOSTRILS.

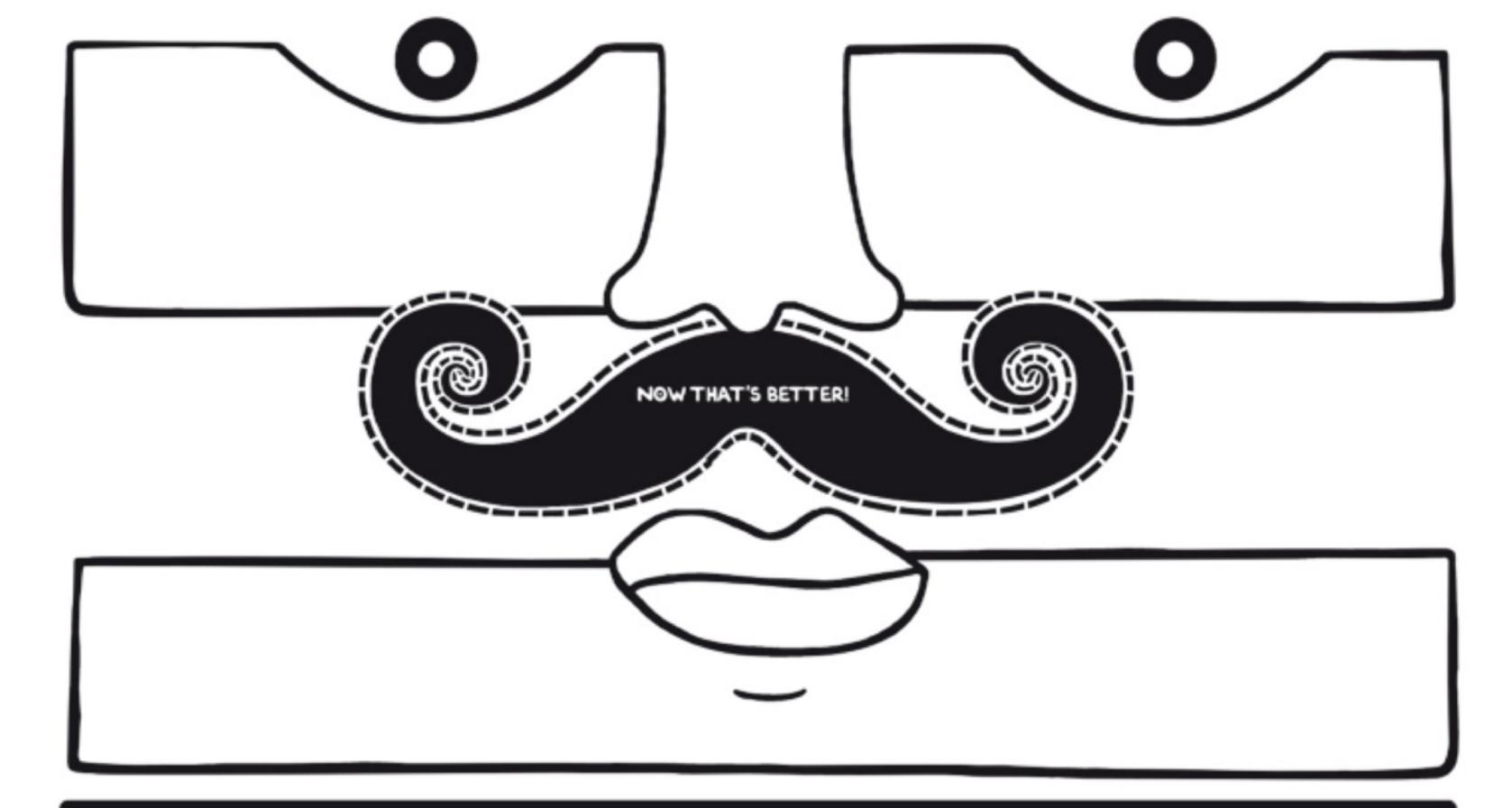


AND -ISN'T IT PUZZLING! YOU GAZE, DAZED AND CONFUSED,

you're lost in this disturbingly smooth surface



AND IT LURES YOU: LONG AFTER THIS DISAPPEARANCE, THE STUBBORN SHADOW OF A MOUSTACHE LINGERS ON.



SO AS I LOOK AT BEIRUT'S MARTYR'S SQUARE, STRIPPED OF ITS PAST GLORY AND TURNED INTO A GIANT PARKING SPOT, I CAN ALMOST SEE A FLOATING MOUSTACHE: THE SHADOW OF A CITY THAT IS LONG GONE.

ArtReview 33

### Lise Sarfati



## She

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## NOW B his

The pick of things you didn't know you really needed **OLIVER BASCIANO** 



#### Pots

Phillips de Pury has taken temporary premises in Brook Street, London, for a shop, open until the end of January, that is selling limited-edition and one-off works by various artists and designers, including Max Lamb, Martino Gamper, Tauba Auerbach and Swedish practice Humans Since 1982. Among the assortment of furniture pieces, apparel, jewellery and other such ephemera sits one of our favourite household products from last year: Pia Wüstenberg's Stacking Vessels (pictured), in which three individual containers, made out of ceramic, a range of coloured blown glass and turned wood, can be stacked atop each other, combining to form a vase.

phillipsdepury.com

£720



#### Pop

Tauba Auerbach's [2,3], a pop-up book of six die-cut paper sculptures published in an edition of 1,000, sees the painter's preoccupation with geometry and convoluted form being extended beyond the flat canvas surface.

printedmatter.org

\$550

#### Shiny-Shiny

Anselm Reyle brings his bright metallic aesthetic to a couture capsule collection of accessories for Dior. This range of purses (pictured), clutch bags, sunglasses, shoes and scarves is not for the shy, retiring type, but certainly goes some way towards countering the winter gloom.

dior.com

£60C



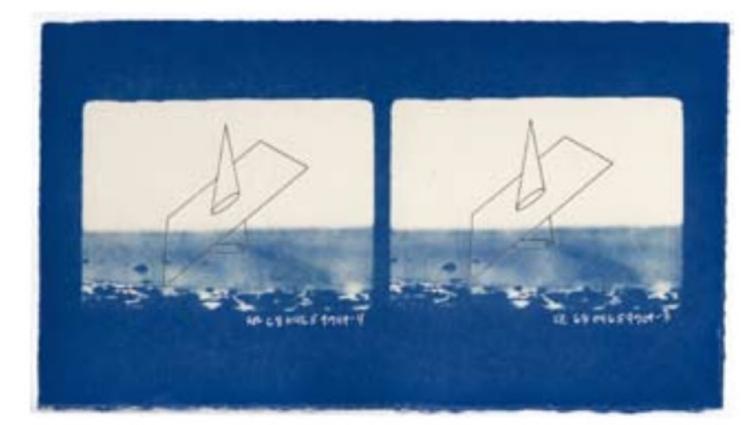
#### **Doubles**

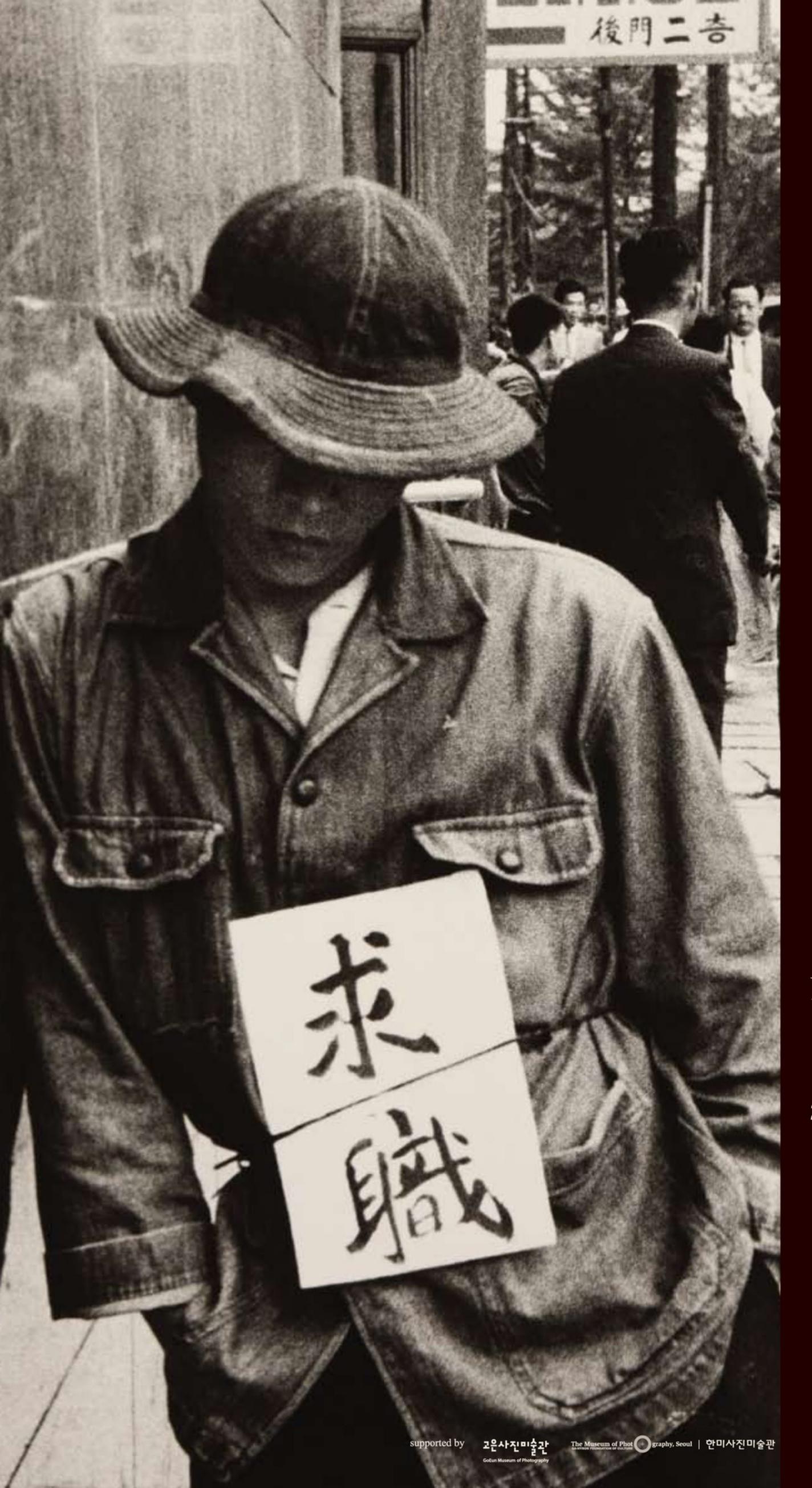
James Hobbs took two adjacent frames from a 16mm film that captures the turbulent tide at Kilnsea - a hamlet perched on the end of a peninsula in South Yorkshire - and enlarged and reproduced them as a cyanotype. Finishing the stereoscopic print, offered in an edition of 100 by the American artist, two identical diagrams have been overlaid in a hot

henninghamfamilypress. co.uk

silver foil.

£120





기록의 예술

예술의 기록

Photography of Limb Eung Sik

National Art Museum, Deoksugung

2011. 12. 21 - 2012. 02. 12

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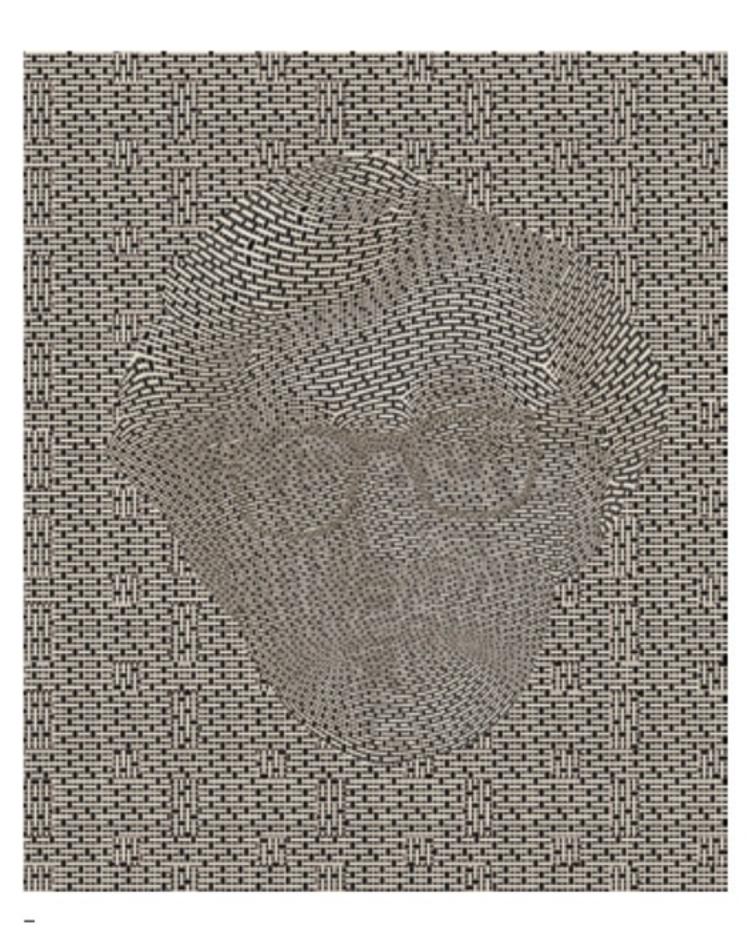


## **Bucolic**

This DVD and book package, in a signed edition of 200 by Andrew Kötting, is a portrait of the cult filmmaker's decaying Pyrenean home. It includes drawings by the artist and contributions from writers Iain Sinclair and John Roseveare, plus music by Scanner. Melancholic and pathos-packed.

lux.org.uk

£30



## Transplendent!

Artists Space releases its third annual editions portfolio, and sticking to tradition, this collection is no run-of-the-mill, half-dozen-print suite. Instead Allora & Calzadilla have produced a small painted cast bronze sculpture in the shape of an Elastoplast; there's a large-scale sculptural wallwork by Wolfgang Tillmans; a copper etching plate with a \$100,000 bill impressed on it by Rirkrit Tiravanija; and a print by Paul Chan, Wht is the nture of lw (2011) – all contained in a box designed by Thomas Bayrle that figures the face of Woody Allen in silkscreened outline. The portfolio comes in an edition of 100.

artistsspace.org

\$1,000



### Tick-Tock

Intrigued by a scene in Harold Lloyd's 1923 film Safety Last!, in which the comic actor is seen hanging high above the street from the hands of a clock afixed to the facade of a department store, Catherine Yass has produced this series of eight etchings, each in an edition of 20. As a neat comment on decay and the march of time, the artist repeatedly fed the movie's film reel through a projector, deliberately

alancristea.com

its surface.

causing damage to

FROM \$1,200

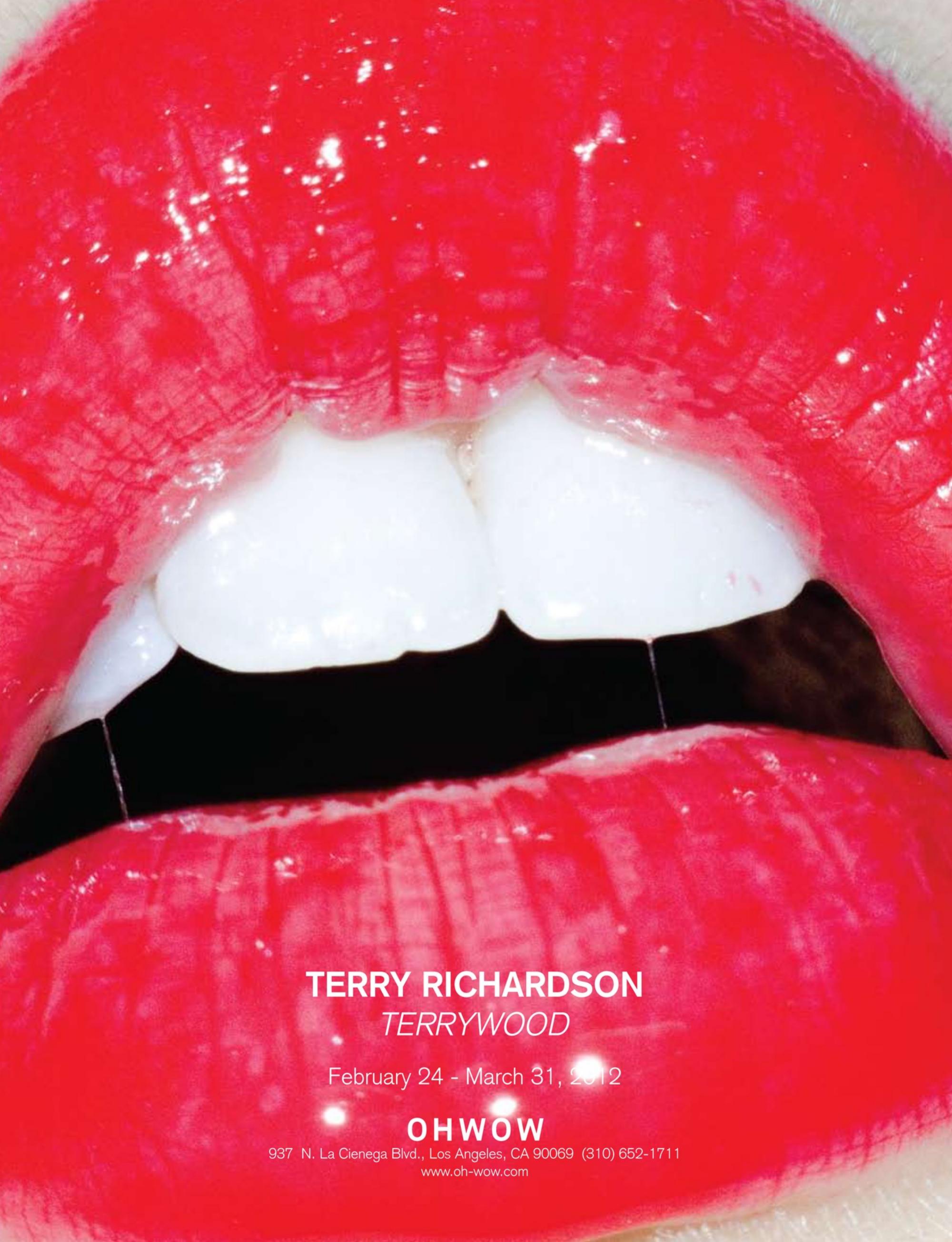


## **Trumps**

An odd, unofficial, version of the classic card game Top
Trumps, but instead of comparing the pros and cons of fighter planes or dinosaurs, players must weigh up 26 London galleries – comparing visitor numbers, artists represented, staff size and the like. We're geeky about art, but not necessarily this geeky.

gallerytrumps.com

£12



## **Off-Space Travels**

**OLIVER BASCIANO** 

## , BIRMINGHAM

An ongoing series of journeys along art roads less travelled - this month a gallery in the Midlands

'm standing in front of a painting by Rob Pruitt. A spread of luminescent yellow pigment is sandwiched by fading strips of purple to create something akin to a colour-field painting. The art historical reverence is broken by the addition of a crude, minimally marked smiley face - two scribbled eyes and a childlike mouth - overlaying the yellow expanse.

The road trip has rolled up to Eastside Projects in Birmingham, and I'm at the opening of its pragmatically titled Painting Show - which includes this work by Pruitt, titled Comme ci, comme ca... (2010). Later, Gavin Wade - the artistcurator who in 2008 founded Eastside with Simon and Tom Bloor, Ruth Claxton, James Langdon and Céline Condorelli, drawing on their practices as artists, curators, graphic designers and architects - tells me how they had had trouble getting Pruitt's 2.9m-wide canvas through the gallery door the previous evening, despite the vaulting architecture of the space, a former cabinetmaker's workshop. The crate it was delivered in had to be jettisoned outside, and a group of audience members, who had come for a curator's introduction to the show, were commandeered to help carefully maneuver the work inside.

The anecdote is noteworthy inasmuch as it involves the two key strands that run through Eastside's strategy: collaboration, be it ad hoc or formally composed, and a physical and conceptual negotiation with the gallery, both as building and institutional entity. This current show, curated by Wade and artist Sophie von Hellermann, sees

hardly a surface free of paint for example. Mobile wall panels, designed by architect Adolf Krischanitz for the Secession and on loan from the flocking on canvas, 230 x 290 cm

applied directly to their MDF surface. Likewise the permanent gallery walls are muralled by Nicolas Party and Tamuna Sirbiladze. Over the top of these interventions hang the work of the 30-odd curated artists. On first entrance it seems like a festival of bad taste. Colours clash, works battle for attention and there seems to be no escape from the gluttonous hang. Then something odd happens, a shift in perception occurs. The gallery handout does not provide immediate orientation - there's no handy map, just a list of works in sequence, forcing the visitor to first find a painting by an artist he recognises and then identify the other works in relation to this one. Find R.H. Quaytman's silkscreen on wood, Distracting Distance, Chapter 16 (Woman in the Sun Yellow Scuff) (2010), for instance, and you've identified an example of Paul Thek's self-labelled 'bad painting' hung to its right. Whence, and with perseverance, one can scout out an example of Imran Qureshi's politically charged work, an intricate, detailed watercolour with gold leaf of a Pakistani slaughterhouse bloodbath, or a heavily handled but affecting abstract painting by Josh Smith. Corralled with these are works that expand the medium beyond the flat surface: Richard Tuttle's 1998 corrugated cardboard wall sculpture, Boys Let's Be Bad Boys (5), which sports just a splash of green paint, for example, or Rupert Norfolk's application of enamel on window blind in Blind II (2008). In plotting one's path, the viewer is forced out of his traditional role, and the navigation of the exhibition becomes an

immersive, concentrated task in which extra attention has to be paid to the physical relationship of the paintings to each other and to the architecture of the temporary walls

and gallery space in general. In short, the exhibition becomes less a collection of discrete practices than an installation to be taken as a whole. The act of connecting individual works thematically is usurped by the route-finding exploration of this managed aesthetic that the viewer has been curatorially asked to undertake.

The fact that Wade and von Hellerman's exhibition is more immersive installation than group show, with the curators' input looming









Painting Show (installation view, Eastside Projects, Birmingham, November 2011)

right:

Matthew Harrison

Willkommen. Bienvenue.

Welcome. C'mon In.,

2008, 22 types of wood,
cellulose painted aluminium
brackets, stainless steel,
aluminium fixings





left:

Heather & Ivan Morison

Pleasure Island, 2007–8,
installation, office fixtures,
kitchen and bar fixtures,
meeting room fixtures,
redwood, coloured glass.

All images: Stuart Whipps. Courtesy Eastside Projects, Birmingham large, will come as no surprise to the regular Eastside visitor. Previous exhibitions have been titled Curtain Show (2010), Book Show (2010) and Narrative Show (2011), all of which, like this current one, and with a reference

to El Lissitzky's 1920s Abstract Cabinet project, built and played with a relationship between their titular mediums and the gallery itself. So in this latest incarnation, it is as if the architecture of the gallery is offering a critique of the medium of painting, and the paintings of the surrounding built environment.

Wade does not separate his directorship of the gallery from his practice. A founding principle of Eastside, detailed in the gallery's first 'User's Manual' (which is now in its fourth, evolved edition), is the statement that 'an artistrun space is not a stop gap'. Wade's practice, even before the gallery, dealt with structures both social and architectural, and the artist sees Eastside as being a natural continuation of this. The result is a gallery that prides itself on its lack of neutrality and actively seeks to physically express its exhibition history and the personal subjectivity of the director and his multitude of collaborators. Works from old shows hang around. A totemic sculpture by Jennifer Tee has been a permanent fixture in the gallery space since 2010. The handle of the door to the street is by Matthew Harrison. The gallery office is a structure, Pleasure Island, originally designed by Heather and Ivan Morison for the Welsh Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2007. Eastside seeks to be a difficult space that must be negotiated, in which the institution is an active collaborator rather than merely a passive enabler.:

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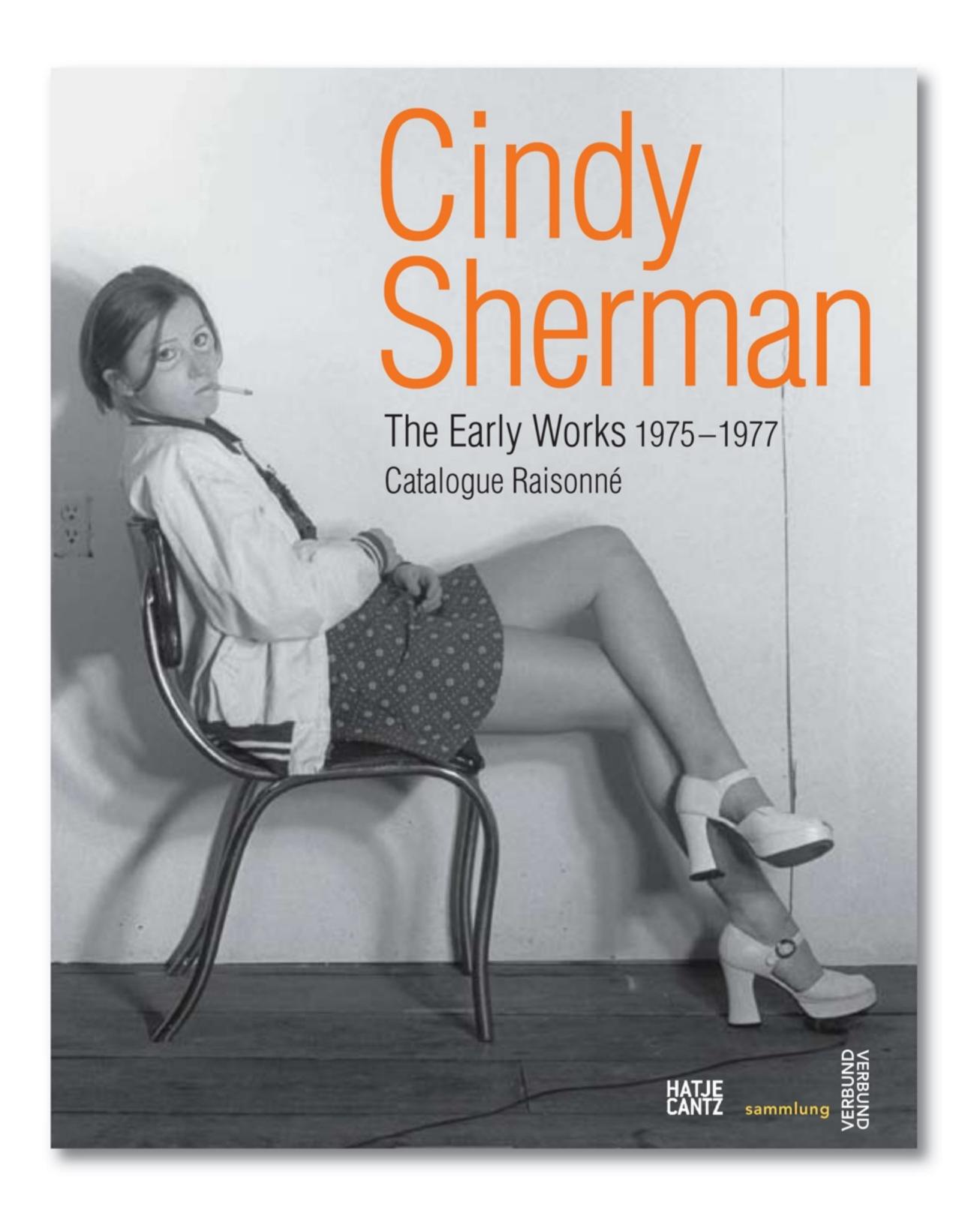
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## Catalogue Raisonné

This new Catalogue Raisonné assesses the conceptual beginnings of Cindy Sherman's early work. Following in-depth scholarly research, Gabriele Schor, director of SAMMLUNG VERBUND in Vienna, has produced a definitive survey and in depth essay. The book is a collaboration between Cindy Sherman, SAMMLUNG VERBUND and Metro Pictures and appears in January 2012.

## **Exhibition**

That's me – That's not me. Early Works by Cindy Sherman Vertical Gallery in the VERBUND headquarters in Vienna 26 January – 16 May 2012 Registration necessary: sammlung@verbund.com

http://www.verbund.com/sammlung



## No 10: KIERKEGAARD ON FIPPING ARTWO

The writings of Søren Kierkegaard (1813–55), which are about extreme states of mind and a society unwilling or unable to look within, set the stage for existentialism, the twentieth-century philosophy concerned with authentic selfhood in an age of alienation.



### **ArtReview**

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. There's so much ArtReview readers are dying to hear about. Do you think Munch is a kind of visual version of you? Is Tracey Emin the updated version?

### Søren Kierkegaard

I wonder what is seen in Munch by a twenty-firstcentury audience. The Sick Child, The Scream and ghastly darkness in an Oslo street - I suppose he

is the artist for whom 'the personal' is the be-all and end-all. But I see him as an artist of materials, as with any painter. They don't deal with ideas as such. Ideas are the materials of writers. If they were the materials of artists, where would that leave Munch's visual forms, why does he have them, what are they doing? If they are the equivalent of words for writers, then why do they have so much sensuality, why are they so musical

their own tangibility getting in the way? Anyone educated in the history of Modernism knows that Munch was influenced by various hot factors down south - the art of Gauguin, and the symbolist style and by the explanations of what Gauguin and Van Gogh were up to that Emile Bernard, their artist colleague, came up with. So you have to think about artistic ideas being embodied, not just floating somewhere, waiting for a museum that picture of damned souls looming out of and independent, and how do they do their tour docent to explain them. The way the paint conveying job - the conveying of ideas - without goes on and the way forms are arranged, their

light and dark, and their placement are what a painting is. It's either intense in these ways or less intense, it has substance or not. No amount of explanation is going to change that. I think of presence and absence in Munch: the holes for eyes, and the existential idea of the emptiness of existence. There comes a midnight hour when all masks come off and the personality must be revealed. What if you've been so used to peddling false personalities that when the hour comes there is nothing individual there?

How does Tracey Emin fit in?

**SK** She creates a desperado self.

Is it a misunderstanding to believe she's in a direct line back to Munch and that she's refreshing because she brings an emotional sincerity back into art that had been lost sight of?

SK Yes.

What do her forms tell you about?

SK They tell you about fragmentation.

What do you think about Los Angeles artist Mark Grotjahn's ongoing lawsuit against a collector for resale royalties on works by him that the collector acquired at auction and then flipped?

SK I think both of them lead lives of despair. Flipping is the logical corollary of an art system based only on lurid glamour, on mere wallowing in spiritual indifference and futility.

Yes, but get real. Grotjahn says he's asking for what's his according to California law, while the collector says those particular legal requirements are poorly written and that because of that incoherence they're rarely put into practice, so he doesn't feel he should have to do what no one else does.

SK These issues speak only of sickness.

Are you saying art is hopeless now? When did it start? Is The Scream devalued because Munch did different versions? Why did he do them? Was it to get attention or for the money? What do you think authentic art is? What's the line exactly when it starts being something else?

of your own existence. What are you? What are you running from? What are you afraid of? Fear and trembling are not the prime mover of existence, love is the prime mover, but love is a great giving up of the self, and if you don't have a real self, what do you have to give up? My understanding of the emptiness of life, as expressed in such books as Fear and Trembling, or The Concept of Anxiety, or The Sickness unto Death – in which there tend to

be a variety of invented characters all arguing with each other, speaking wittily in made-up ironic dialogues, so that it is hard to tell what the real Kierkegaard thinks - was all about the death of faith. For example, I explored the Old Testament story of Abraham and Isaac, very important to the New Testament, in which Abraham takes the knife to his son just because God tells him to, and he has no way of knowing that God will save Isaac at the last moment. The point is that faith is the only route to authentic selfhood, but to be real it must be irrational, and it must be constantly remade. At every moment you're in a state of becoming, you stand in fear and trembling on the edge of an abyss and you create yourself morally. Faith, the highest human passion, has to be accepted in all its unreason and absurdity. It is nothing if it isn't outrageous, whereas for hypocrites it is enough merely to enact being 'a Christian'.

So it's not that art goes off the rails at some point, but rather that, whatever it is, it has to be considered a bit more existentially?

**SK** Yes. What I was just speaking of are the foundations of the existentialist attitude to the self. The real, the authentic are the central concerns of existentialism. That's the reason why it comes up so much in explanations of Abstract Expressionism. The particular form of existentialism that is looked back on as a kind of nostalgic meaning hovering in the air somewhere nearby to de Kooning's paint handling, which is on view in his recent retrospective at MoMA, is the version formulated by Sartre directly after the Second World War. Of course in opposition to me he was an atheist, as was Nietzsche. But he said that the difficulty for him or anyone else of being an atheist, in that you must always be creating yourself morally, is as great as my difficulty ever was in being a Christian.

Are you saying art should be more personal? Many ArtReview readers will sympathise with that view.

SK Not at all. In fact when I mentioned the term earlier, it was because I think it is meaningless. It comes from PR. You may as well be singing the Fairy Liquid jingle from the old TV ads: "Now hands that do dishes can feel soft as your face with mild green Fairy Liquid". When you ask about the fantasies and desires of the art audience in 2012 - I was born almost exactly two centuries earlier-you're speaking of a culture that has different types of existentialism as part of its strata, even though the most visible aspects of the culture no longer resemble anything that used to be called existentialism. Existentialism's interest in dramatic experience, which is consistent whether it's my thought or Nietzsche's or Heidegger's or Sartre's, or even Derrida's, makes it very exciting for art. The critic Clement Greenberg criticised the pretentiousness of its use as a sort of legitimisation for art. He was very cutting. He said things like, 'Death is an overrated literary idea'. (So in a way he's very exciting for art, too - that is, if you're against pretentiousness and see it as a problem.) Existentialism is preoccupied with death, of course, because that's the great factor in anyone's existence. But what Greenberg was getting at was not existentialism but the general acceptance of split-off fragments of it as ciphers for importance. It's no accident that those fragments became something like advertising slogans since, in the USA during the 1950s, a new and growing art audience of depraved philistines had to have something to rationalise or make palatable what would, to it, otherwise be a mystery: abstraction. Such art had suddenly been made glamorous by the media purely because of its relation to money. And at the same time 'the personal' became an art buzzword, to be killed off by Pop during the 1960s and then revived again in the self-spilling, attention-grabbing consumer individualism that Emin's career path expresses.

The ArtReview readership is fascinated by the magazine's annual equivalent of The Sunday Times Rich List, except it's not about money as such but influence: the people who have the knowledge. Not knowledge of Kierkegaard or Sartre, but of the ripples, flows and eddies of a particular bit of the great river of art, with all its surfaces and reflections. The event is called the Power 100. It compensates for the confusion created by pluralism, the condition of art at the moment, by offering something nonchaotic; a streamlined, clear picture of those who are not baffled.

SK What they're not baffled about, because to them they are as natural as breathing, are the morally indefensible moves that have to be made all the time in order to keep something as trivial as the artworld going.:

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ArtReview 45

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## Sam Jacob

HOW HEAR This

### **SAM JACOB**

Real design writing

### **CHRISTIAN VIVEROS-FAUNE**

Occupy Museums?!

### J.J. CHARLESWORTH

Art's nervous breakdown

### **HETTIE JUDAH**

Good (bacterial) design

### JONATHAN GROSSMALERMAN

The slaughter of the art handlers

### MIKE WATSON

'Don't mention the crisis'

### LAURA MCLEAN-FERRIS

Let them eat cake

esign criticism is a vague discipline. If you flick through a design magazine you'll probably wonder if it's even a discipline at all. On the whole it contains no actual criticism, just descriptions of things - often rewritten press releases - with a subjective opinion serving as conclusion. At the other end of the spectrum, architecture, the most academic of design disciplines, has special places where its own academic discourse plays out. At its best, though, it does something else. Many decades ago, in this very column, Reyner Banham pursued a form of design criticism that was about things, about the world and the society that formed them, and, perhaps most significantly, about how design might change the world. But there are other kinds of design writing. Not copy that's produced to describe things, explain them or figure out their meanings and implications. Not public writing, but writing that happens in and around the design process.

If you visited an architect's office, you'd find shelves of project files. Inside them you'd find a dense collection of pages, documents, brochures, drawings, things typed and scrawled over, all punched and collated into the lever arch. These files are not the grand story of design, in which objects spring from the designer's imagination fully formed, like Athena from the head of Zeus, armed and ready for the world. These stories are far more banal and way less heroic.

Leafing through the file, you'll find contracts, letters of appointment, minutes of meetings, bits of building code, product literature, letters, permits, forms and many other kinds of tedious documents. It's here that you'll find the true definitions of architecture and design, and here that you can trace the development of the profession itself. Here you'll find genres of writing with their own mysterious codes, their own languages, shorthands and conventions. They have their own histories and come into existence in response to social, economic, political and technological change. Yet as much as they respond to the world, they also create the terms under which the world can be designed and produced.

This kind of stuff isn't just the product of our overly bureaucratic modern world. Indeed, the first building codes appear in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 22:8), prescribing the use of a parapet to prevent falls from a roof, and the eyefor-an-eye punishment that a designer should face should his work cause harm. But over time, the codes and controls of design have become more pervasive and elaborate. Patents, for example, granted to protect design invention by giving their authors exclusive periods to reap rewards from their work, may have existed in some form since the fifteenth century, but it was not until the beginning of the Industrial Revolution that



## FORGET MAGAZINES LIKE THIS ONE, SAYS A DESIGN CRITIC – IF YOU WANT

## REAL INSIGHT INTO WHAT DESIGN IS ALL ABOUT, GO RUMMAGE THROUGH THE BOX FILES IN YOUR NEAREST ARCHITECTURE STUDIO

they became widespread. But not everything is patentable. Under US law, patents could first be awarded to inventions that were 'useful and important'. In 1793 this definition was altered to 'new and sufficiently useful'. This tiny change in the phrasing marked a radical change of emphasis, and in turn a radical change in the kinds of things that could be 'invented'. Indeed it's no overstatement to claim that this one-word alteration created the world of design that now

surrounds us. Imagine, for example, watching a shopping channel where the products were *useful* and important rather than simply sufficiently useful. There would be no laser-guided scissors (and before you fall for the perfectly-straight-lines-every-time pitch, just remember that the laser will wobble along with your hand) and no Patio Park ('an adorable dog potty' with a 'charming picket fence design and mock fire hydrant').

In an extreme case, noncritical writing about design changes the world drastically. Baedeker guidebooks were originally written in the mid-to-late Victorian era to serve a growing international tourist industry. But the guide to Britain found another use between April and June 1942, on the nights of the 'Baedeker Blitz', when charming tourists sites, points of historical interest and so on, listed in the guide became the targets of Luftwaffe bombing raids. Nazi propagandist Baron Gustav Braun von Sturm outlined the plan: "We shall go out and bomb every building in Britain marked with three stars in the Baedeker Guide." And so the guidebooks became the means of destroying the very sites they celebrated.

Briefs, procurement documents, contracts, specifications and so on swamp the contemporary designer, yet they are usually considered inert parts of the design process. Perhaps, then, it's here among the dull reams of text rather than glossy design publications or high-minded discourse that design writing's real power to change the world exists: its ability to both destroy cities and fill up late-night TV advertorials for products that one can only marvel at in bemused amazement.

ArtReview 49

## **Christian Viveros-Fauné**

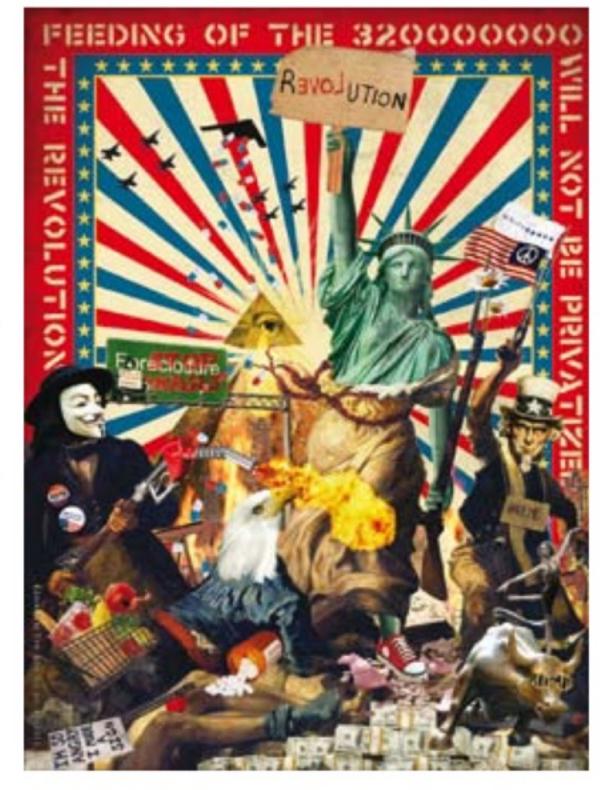
# ARE PROTESTS AGAINST THE ARTWORLD'S MONEYED UPPER The New York ber, some two ed thirty-fourNoah Fischer edame MoMA, POUNTO

hese are, depressingly, the facts, as reported by *The New York Observer*: sometime in the late afternoon of 20 October, some two dozen folks in scruffy coats and floppy hats trailed thirty-four-year-old artist and Occupy Wall Street organiser Noah Fischer onto a number 4 subway train. Their destination? The grande dame MoMA, plunked stolidly at Fifth Avenue and 53rd Street. Their stated purpose: to march onto her privileged grounds and, in their own words, 'occupy the temple of the cultural elite'.

'Today is a historic day of the occupation of museums in 2011', Fischer intoned through his Trotsky beard. 'On the boards of these museums are the same people on Wall Street playing games with our money.' Taking conviction for certainty, he ranted on: 'The art market is like a pyramid scheme! At the top of the pyramid are the museums!'

Fischer's disgust with the status quo – which Zelig-like art critic Jerry Saltz described in a man-on-the-street interview outside MoMA as forceful 'indignation' – is something I've advocated for repeatedly in this column, particularly with respect to the Arab Spring, the Chilean student demonstrations and the global Occupy movement itself. Yet disgust, lazy and ill-informed, can rapidly turn Elmer Gantry-ish – its hectoring byproduct being, naturally, Tea Party-like righteousness. This might be a good time, then, to invoke an old Yiddish proverb as an antidote to these politico-rhetorical excesses: A half-truth is a whole lie.

While it is actually true that the top of the art market has become a playground for modern-day robber barons the Occupy movement correctly tags as 'the one percent', MoMA's board is not, in fact, run by hedge-fund cowboys and derivatives dealers (MoMA's trustees mostly made money the old-fashioned way, by inheriting it – the wife of Lehman Brothers's final CEO excepted). Equally ridiculous is the idea that US museums – save possibly for Wal-Mart heiress Alice Walton's Crystal Bridges – sit atop a pyramid of wealth dwarfing the billions of trader-collectors



like Steven A. Cohen and Kenneth C. Griffin. MoMA is not Citibank and Agnes Gund is not Gordon Gekko-as any sensible individual knows. But as passions escalate, the facts, and the deliberation necessary to arrive at them, are often unceremoniously shown the door.

Another sensible fact nearly too obvious to mention is the following: there are other, far less transparent institutions than MoMA (and the Frick and the New Museum, to name just two other Gotham spaces threatened with 'occupation') that fit the Occupy movement's bill. Take, for instance, the big auction houses, which are still reaping record profits from transacting with the world's megarich; ditto for legendary 'big box' galleries like Gagosian. So why aren't these singlemindedly commercial temples of lucre being aggressively protested while publicly accountable museums, quite boneheadedly, are? What's

keeping the more arty denizens of Occupy Wall
Street from marching up to Tobias Meyer's luxury
digs – like they did with JPMorgan Chase CEO
Jamie Dimon's Upper East Side manse – to protest
the chummily dubious practice of 'chandelier
bidding'? (The movement's support for lockedout Sotheby's art handlers has, bizarrely, not led
to a critique of the role of auction houses in
general.)

One major reason is the astonishing lack of collective imagination that corrals the discussion around Occupy Museums within the arty precincts of institutional critique. Not thinking beyond the largely symbolic actions of past failed movements - the 1969-71 Art Workers' Coalition is the going touchstone in most uncritical appraisals - turns out to be a recipe for repeating their radically ineffectual history (the idea, for example, that MoMA gifted the public 'Free Fridays' in response to the AWC's agitation, today looks less a political triumph than a case of successful tokenism). Scrap the old art blinders, and something shrouded in groupthink becomes crystal-clear: namely, that today's problems - in both the artworld and the real world - have nothing to do with museum policy, whether at MoMA or the Brooklyn Children's Museum.

To those satisfied with the idea that political movements are 'messy' and 'not pre-planned' (an odd echo of Donald Rumsfeld's line that you go into war 'with the army you have'), I say this: there could be nothing worse than consigning the current mood of artistic political engagement to the irrelevance and incoherence of the past. Art and artists have a responsibility to address the issues of their time – creatively, provocatively, thoughtfully. No one said the obligation ended with just speaking up.



## Love Me Tender

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# hat would Thomas Hirschhorn look like with half his face blown off? I'm idly turning this idea over while standing in the Swiss's latest grotto of disaster, *Crystal of Resistance*, the artist's presentation for the Swiss Pavilion at this year's Venice Biennale. I avoided the summer opening this time, so here I am, on the last weekend of the Biennale, in a freezing, blue-skied Venice, surrounded by the apocalyptic deluge of accumulated imagery and commodity that is Hirschhorn's calling card. Teetering stacks of TVs encrusted with crystals, plastic chairs overcome with clusters of stuck-on drinks cans, a whole wall taped up with rows of garish entertainment and current affairs magazines, countless photographs of protesters from across the world strung out like bunting, silvered surfaces everywhere, shop mannequins with their innards

and faces hollowed out and filled with crystals, bacterialike clusters of cotton-wool buds, more crystals stuck to everything with coagulations of adhesive tape.

And of course, reams of photographs of the maimed and destroyed bodies of people from the never-ending warzones of Afghanistan, Iraq or wherever. It's relentless: mangled corpses, heads with brains flopping out, guts smeared all over, decapitations, children burst like melons, arms, legs, hands, feet, missing or blasted to mincemeat. As I head for the exit, towards the polite queue of young artgoers waiting to have their eyes fucked in by all this, I walk past a row of plastic chairs entirely covered with a mosaic of cheap mobile phones. This will become significant later, but right now I'm just happy to leave the Giardini, away from Hirschhorn and the noise of the howling, squealing gears of Allora & Calzadilla's overturned battle tank-cumtreadmill installed outside the American Pavilion.

Back at my hotel, flicking through the channels of news programmes about the eurozone crisis and the succession of the ridiculous (democratically elected) Silvio Berlusconi by the utterly unremarkable (unelected) new prime minister, Mario Monti, I stumble onto a teleshopping channel which, to my surprise, is selling art. A forceful, handsome, effusive Italian guy in smart pinstripe suit and tie is busy trying to sell what, to my further astonishment, turns out to be the work of 1960s French Nouveau Réaliste Arman. Arman's signature style was his use of large 'accumulations' of consumer commodities, often encased for posterity in blocks of transparent cast polyester resin. He first did this in 1963 and then spent the next four decades repeating the idea, until he died in 2005 - a happy, rich, largely forgettable chapter of

# A CRITIC CHASTISES ARTISTS FOR RUNNING HEADLESS AND SCARED FROM THE REAL ISSUES



contemporary art history. But now, as if by the sarcastic intervention of some cosmic jester of art-critical coincidence, the Arman 'accumulation' for sale tonight (a €9,000 signed edition) is a large block of clear resin... full of cheap mobile phones.

Arman's accumulations were an early response to what has become a truism among critics of the late-capitalist world; that we live among a great excess of material things, of runaway consumption and the evil rule of the commodity. Already among radical critics of the 1960s there was a sense that the world was out of control, and as I walk back through Hirschhorn's installation the next day, the same sense euphoricapocalyptic hysteria is present, except on a vaster, more aggressive scale. In his ranting statement on the website accompanying the show, Hirschhorn declares, 'I want to work in necessity, in urgency and in a panic. This should be understood as: Panic is the solution! That's the POLITICAL.'

But is it? 'I want to work in over-haste, I want to work in headlessness and I want to work in panic,' declares the artist. It's a statement which

encapsulates the mood of catastrophe rife in the pavilions of the biennale, among artists who, hypnotised by the belief the world is on the verge of imminent self-destruction, have turned their art into a kind of blind, zealous, emotional-political panic. And Hirschhorn, with his self-righteous insistence on not stopping to think for one fucking minute, appears here as the purest, most strident expression of this panic.

But it's everywhere – from Allora & Calzadilla's United States of Self-loathing, to Mike Nelson's anxious simulation of an alien Middle East, to Christian Boltanski's crazed machine of speeding overpopulation – the nervous breakdown of a politics of crisis suffuses every pavilion. It's like being in a room full of manic-depressives who haven't had their meds, all sobbing and babbling.

Perhaps I'm perversely unmoved by these outbursts of hysteria masquerading as politicised art. Perhaps the various crises besetting the world currently are as bad as these and other artists seem to think. Or maybe the herd-mentality of many artists, with no other outlet for their angst, is creating this rapidly inflating bubble of political-art panic. Art very rarely changes the world politically, but mostly amplifies either the sense of optimism or futility of any given moment. Yet in the current culture of disaster, it's almost as if nobody wants even to *start* to look beyond the sense of crisis, to possible solutions, to alternatives, to the future.

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## **Hettie Judah**

## DESIGN CRITIC HAS SEEN THE dvances in human civilisation can be charted according to our ability to distance ourselves from the stickier aspects of our biological nature. The

charted according to our ability to distance ourselves from the stickier aspects of our biological nature. The more sophisticated we become as social beings, the less we seem to enjoy facing up to our other identity as organisms in a finely interconnected web of natural relationships. As we have moved from agrarian to industrial to postindustrial social models, we have increasingly barricaded our minds and bodies against waste products, decay, death and dirt.

It could be argued that much of the grim environmental trouble that we've got ourselves into is rather the result of this, but what to do? In space-rich farmland, an inquiring relationship with our own dirt might lead to a progressive symbiosis between man and bacterium. In a cramped city, such a liaison is more likely to lead to outbreaks of cholera, typhoid and E. coli infections. It is a measure of our advanced state of civilisation that we scrub to get the dirt off our skin, chop food on antibacterial plastic boards and flush our waste with a killer dose of bleach.

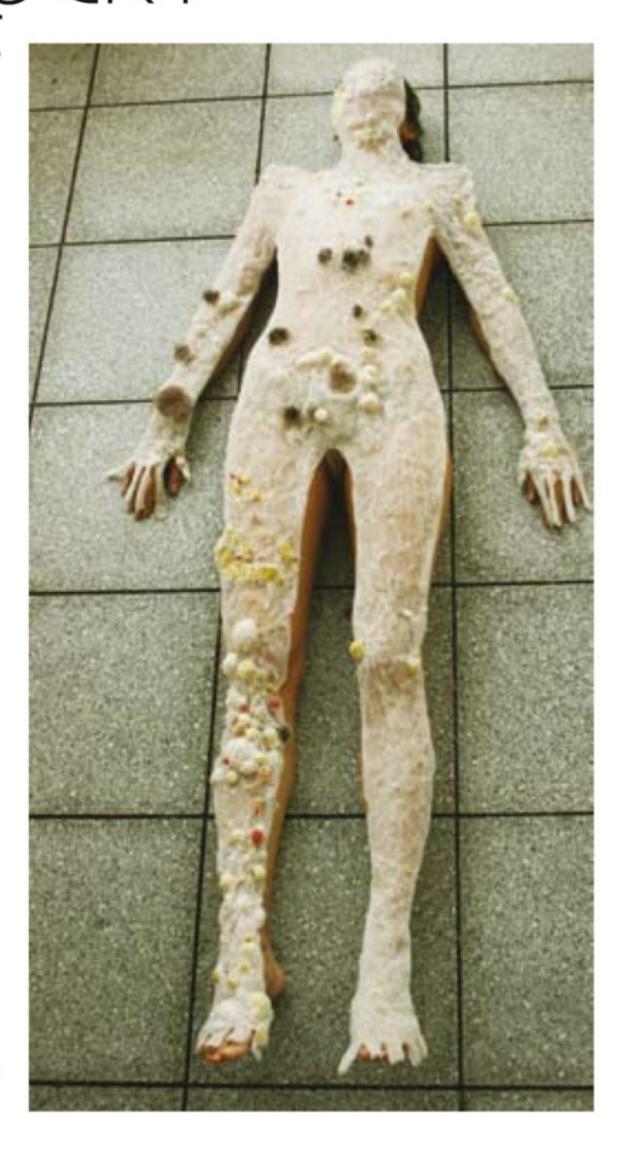
Away from the fevered world of hand sanitisers and Cillit Bang, however, icky goo is having a bit of a moment. Some open-minded design teams are looking to the potently reactive microbial sludge that represents the earliest manifestation of life on earth for inspiration. In Eindhoven, the design team from electronics giant Philips recently presented a prototype microbial home, in which food was cooked using the methane from decomposing waste, plastic rubbish was ground and digested by a mycelium fungus starter culture and bioluminescent bacteria provided soft mood lighting.

Austrian designer Sonja Bäumel focuses more specifically on the bacteria of the skin - the individual, ineradicable layer of microorganisms that creates an invisible interface between you and your every human contact. Bäumel has created bacterial self-portraits by lying in specially constructed Petri dishes, and views the microbial layer like a kind of benign, personalised glove that might form the basis – or at least the inspiration – for responsive textiles. Last November the Textielmuseum Tilburg commissioned Bäumel to create a model of her skin flora out of knitted and crocheted wool. The result has the eerie fragility of a grandmother's scarf done out in a colour scheme more usually seen on the unidentifiable gunk that you find at the back of the fridge.

Humanity has, of course, been using microbes for its own purposes for centuries, from the yeasts and lactobacilli in sourdough bread to the rich mix of fungi and bacteria inside a nice warm compost heap. Their ability to react with and transform waste products has also put microbes at the centre of green technologies, including greywater recycling, which allows all domestic water (bar that from the lavatory) to be treated and reused, and anaerobic digestion, which treats biodegradable waste in an oxygen-free environment to create biogas and fertiliser.

Clive van Heerden, who worked on the microbial-home prototype for Philips, explains that the project was largely intended to test how consumers felt about being reconnected with

natural processes. The prospect of cooking with methane from their own decomposing waste did seem to touch a nerve with visitors to the exhibit, but in reality such efficient self-sufficiency is some way off. Much work still needs to be done in developing the technologies to best harness the power of microbes, but van Heerden thinks that if companies are persuaded that consumers can deal with the 'ick' factor, this really could be the dawning of the age of bacteria.



## Jonathan Grossmalerman

# A LEADING ARTIST THINKS BIG AND DISCOVERS THE BLOODY Ing that I never, ever thought all those people Tome of you may be aware that I dabble in the inspiration strikes. Well, the other capicable departure from vaginas, titties and

et me begin by saying that I never, ever thought all those people would die. Now, some of you may be aware that I dabble in sculpture. You know, when the inspiration strikes. Well, the other day I made an inexplicable departure from vaginas, titties and penises (sometimes apart, often together) and devised a 20-foot gleaming stainless-steel arc honed to a razor's edge. It was a whim, really. I just figured it would be a cool thing to have. It was! 'A gleaming gesture of ill intent', *The New York Times* called it.

Like many artists, I am drawn to the macabre, to death. It's the king of all subject matter. But for real death to happen in front of you is another matter entirely. The awful screaming and unnatural gurgling sounds. The odd popping noises that I didn't know accompany death. The pleading. The hours of pleading. The dying really don't know when to shut up. It was easily the worst day of my fucking life. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

I had only just sent the picture to my gallery when they made the sale. That's how good this piece was. I called my preferred artmoving company to come pack and ship it, and we quickly found out that the sculpture could not be moved without... well... death! It took a few tries to be absolutely sure, and it could be argued that I should have listened to the crew chief, but frankly I was put off by his ginger hair and sourpuss demeanour.

"Look, mister, it's very obviously impossible. Its weight distribution is crazy, it's precariously placed and while it's certainly beautiful, it looks like it could be extremely sharp."

He carelessly ran his fingers across the sculpture's edge, sliced the tips of his index and middle fingers off and screamed like a plump child.

"You were hired to solve a problem. If you can't do that, I need you to leave," I said.

His tone changed: "We'll get it done. It's tough times out there, and frankly we can't afford to lose another big job."

He called in two underlings and directed them to move the piece. After contemplating the task ahead, the taller of the two set to work and immediately sliced off both hands. Slipping in his own blood, he fell forward, cleaving his face on its razor edge. He wasn't dead, but he was stuck, and he screamed for someone to please help him. It was mostly a bubbling howl that we had to conclude was a cry for help. In any case, we decided it was. In the meantime his screaming became more purposeful.

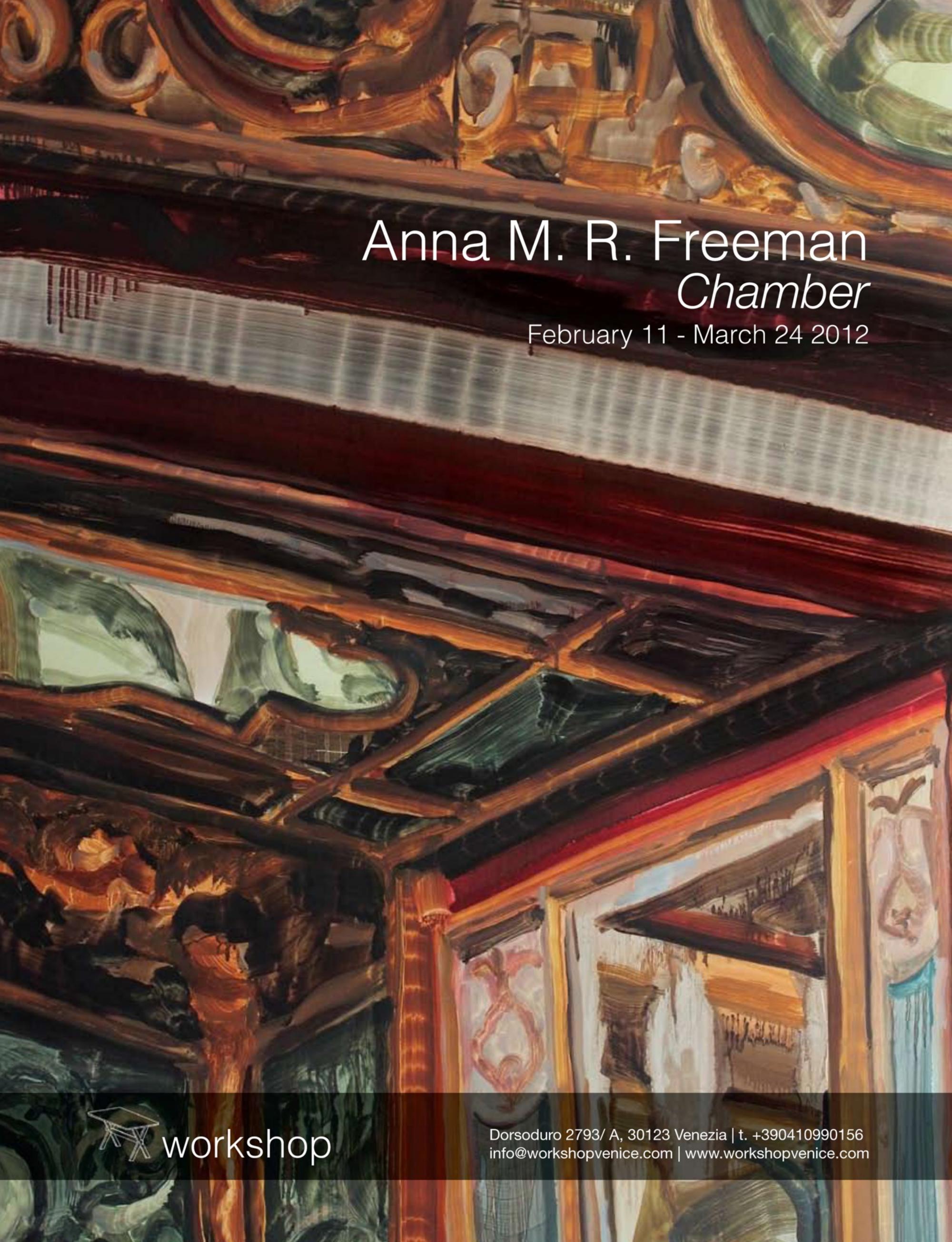


"Good God! This is awful! Aren't you going to do anything?!" I asked, full of empathy for the poor man.

"Get him," the ginger one said to the other.

The young man walked carefully over to the writhing figure. He placed his hands on his colleague's wrenching shoulders and pulled with all his might. His shifting weight caused him to slip comically, and his leg was severed midcalf. A gaping popliteal artery spat blood everywhere like some demonic champagne bottle. He seemed almost surprised by his situation. His eyes fixed on me as he began to crawl towards us. Wailing melodramatically, the victim managed only a couple of feet before the life had gushed out of him. Seven more died that day. Some quickly, some over the course of hours. Living, loving art handlers. Human beings with hopes and dreams and fears and regrets just like you or me. Perhaps they had weekend plans. A softball game they were particularly looking forward to. Maybe a quiet Sunday with the family. It's entirely conceivable. One moment they were just going about their day picking up an awkwardly heavy razor arc and delivering it to a collector's Dallas estate, and then... indescribable horror.

I'm really sorry.





## Mike Watson

## ITALY'S POLITICAL SYSTEM NEEDS TO ADAPT TO SURVIVE.

on't mention the crisis' was the one rule I set myself before entering the 18th Artissima art fair in Turin on the afternoon of last 5 November. Within minutes, however, I had mentioned it, though I think I got away with it. Not least as Wunderkammern, a small contemporary art gallery based in Rome's peripheral Torpignattara zone, was doing brisk business selling 1970s prints – by artist Tomaso Binga – as part of the fair's 'Back to the Future' initiative, in which 20 galleries

were selected to display works by artists of the 1960s and 70s. Though this may be little cause for solace in the artworld – and the world in general – as Artissima took place against a backdrop of wider events that finally came to a head just days later, when both Greece's and Italy's governments passed into the hands of unelected technocrats in a last-ditch attempt to avoid economic collapse. Perhaps those works from the 1960s and 70s are enjoying a renewed popularity as a result of the political and economic parallels that can be drawn between then and now. If so, the sale of such works is no gauge of economic vitality in general.

To be sure, the works on display at the nearby Castello di Rivoli's Arte Povera Internazionale - in which Arte Povera pioneers such as Michelangelo Pistoletto and Giuseppe Penone were displayed alongside international artists linked to and influenced by the movement, such as Art & Language, Rebecca Horn and Andy Warhol - marked a positive and comforting embrace of left-field ideals and politics of the 1960s and 70s. Above all, Arte Povera's tendency to work with raw, low-cost materials provided relief from the slick, saleable art objects that have come to dominate art fairs. That said, the fair did not lack concessions to the countercultural side of art, with fringe events Paratissima, the Others and Artissima Lido all providing platforms for artists and galleries not involved in the fair itself. Inside the fair, the 'New Futures' section was dedicated to young galleries. Indeed, it felt as if there was more periphery than main event.

In this light, the 2011 expansion of Artissima could be seen as a bit like the speculative gambits financial investors cyclically engage in while wrecking the global economy. Though there



SYSTAL AFINE FAIRT

is of course a difference in that the artworld, like industry, tends to rely on the physical existence of manufactured objects, necessitating expensive rental and transport costs. There were gallerists present at Artissima who clearly did not have the means to be there this time around without making those elusive big sales. In this light, the coming years may see art go the way of the financial markets, with works sold remotely on the basis of their investment value, while the middleman – the art fair, the gallerist – is cut out. At Artissima 18, the gamble was on the fringe.

HE MEDIUM OF

200

At a press conference, Turin's (elected) mayor, Piero Fassino, explained that arts funding in 2011 and the coming year would be maintained at previous levels, despite cuts in overall spending. When questioned by me as to truth of this statement, Turin's principal official gave a politician's response: investment in the arts will not only bring money to Turin, but will enrich the lives of its inhabitants. Such an attitude is laudable,

runs against the grain of arts cuts in Italy and may set a precedent if successful, though I suspect what we really await is a cultural game-changer to match the political one we so badly need worldwide. When I saw Fassino at a lavish design private view later that evening, he patted me on the back and gestured to the flowing prosecco and trays of vol-au-vents: "See, my friend, we spend money on the arts here in Turin." Artissima 18 – which, in fairness, featured a lot of high-quality work – felt like a magnificent dinosaur. Its dedication to the fringe signalled a desire to avoid extinction.

ArtReview 59

## Laura McLean-Ferris

# SHE'S EATEN HER CAKE BUT, OUR CRITIC WONDERS, rtissima nk, as I Andre's ased art a black her hit, (IT'S A METAPHOF

hey say the best thing about Artissima is the food. How true, I think, as I chomp my way through Carl Andre's brick sculpture at the Turin-based art fair – delicious. Next I chow down on a black sparkly Sigmar Polke painting – another hit, although perhaps a touch too citrusy for some tastes. A corner of a loopy Cy Twombly painting tastes like chocolate.

Don't worry. I haven't just ingested several million pounds worth of art. Rather, these intricate 'tributes' have been made out of cake and icing by one of Piemonte's most famous pastry chefs as part of an artist's project curated by Lara Favaretto and the fair's director, Francesco Manacorda. Simple Rational Approximations (2011) is located in the middle of the fair. The project takes the form of a proposal for a museum exploring the impermanent and the ephemeral, and comprises a collection of light temporary mobile structures; the cakes make up the museum's 'permanent collection', rapidly disappearing into the bellies of hungry fairgoers.

These edible tributes suggest something about the way we approach art, whether it be in a museum or at a fair. When it comes to art, it may only be collectors who get to have their cake and eat it, but the cakes are also a reminder that there's something very Marie Antoinette about holding an art fair in the middle of a huge economic crisis. I think of the art fair I attended in Athens when the crisis in Greece was reaching epic proportions, which seemed like a moment of fiddling while (ahem) Rome was burning. It reminds me of the story of the extravagant London restaurant that served petits fours to its guests amid the broken glass after its patrons were robbed during the summer riots.

This is the second time I've seen Favaretto's work in Turin – she is one of the region's best-known artists. Last time was in 2008, when I was visiting the Turin Triennale, curated by Daniel Birnbaum. Entitled 50 Moons of Saturn, that was



an exhibition on the theme of melancholy, and though the mood on the day the triennial opened was anything but melancholic – Barack Obama had just won the US elections – that show was an interesting proposition regarding the capacity for melancholy to power something transformative and excessive. Favaretto's contribution to the show was a series of sculptural 'couples' of brightly coloured carwash brushes spinning manically and

gradually wearing away the metal sheets behind them. As in the case of the cakes, she created a work that elegantly conveyed great effort and exuberance, shortly to be used up.

That exhibition, indeed, was based on Birnbaum's book with Anders Olsson, As a Weasel Sucks Eggs - An Essay on Melancholy and Cannibalism (1992), which considered the relationship between melancholy and digestion. Their thesis was that melancholia drives one to do either too little or too much, and to hunger for 'another type of food', and their study centred on the creative potential of those who do 'too much'. In the comedy film Bridesmaids (2011), Kristen Wiig's character, a retired cakemaker, is seen at the lowest ebb of depression spending hours and hours creating herself the perfect cupcake, painting leaves and petals on a sugar flower, only to unceremoniously stuff it messily into her face. The comedy comes from the unlikely excess of artistic effort, destroyed in a comic moment (there's nothing that funny about depressed people stuffing their faces with cake).

Favaretto's cakes, too, might be connected to the depressed times in which we live, as a sort of last-ditch waste of effort and resources: according to the ideas in *As a Weasel Sucks Eggs*, that's the kind of manic creativity that can come out of melancholia.

Perhaps. But this is also a rather Catholic work, I think, in this most Catholic of countries. There's a bit of transubstantiation going on if we imagine that we're actually eating the art in question. Breaking cake with others who believe, I suppose, in these works. But really, are we also all at this art fair clinging on for dear life to the belief that the art market can just keep going in this way? That we can just carry on, drink free champagne and eat cake? Staring at my plate of crumbs, I think that Favaretto's focus on the ephemerality of things is a 'simple, rational approximation' which guesses that it's pretty unlikely.

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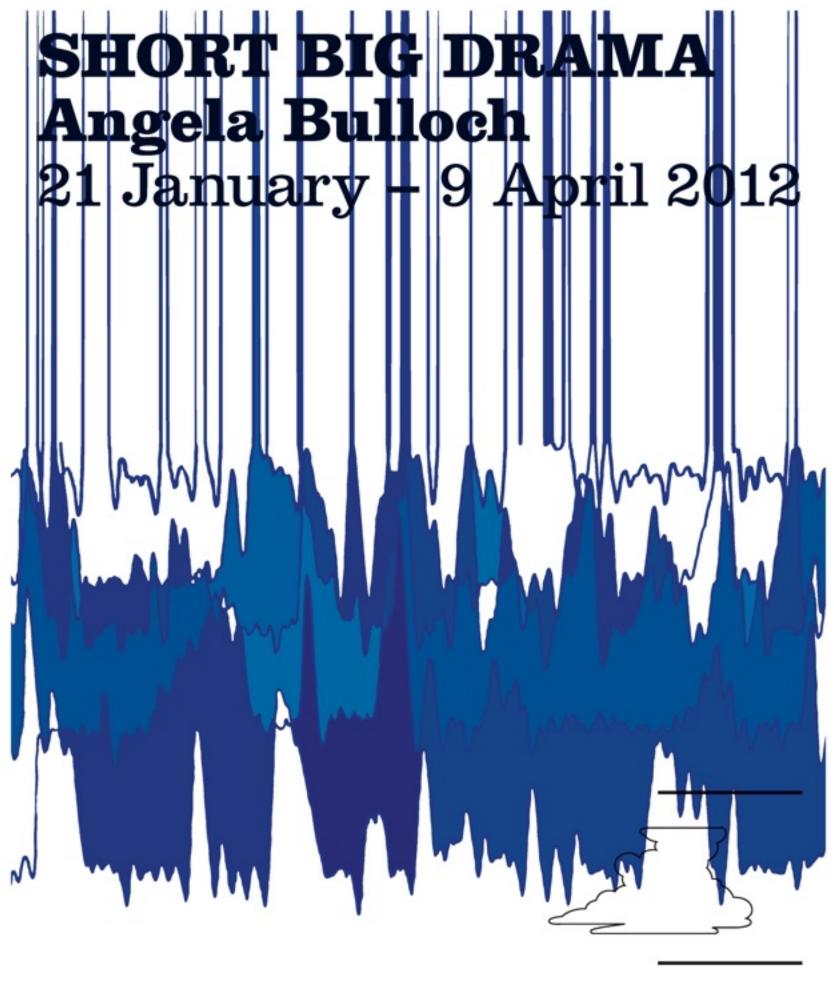
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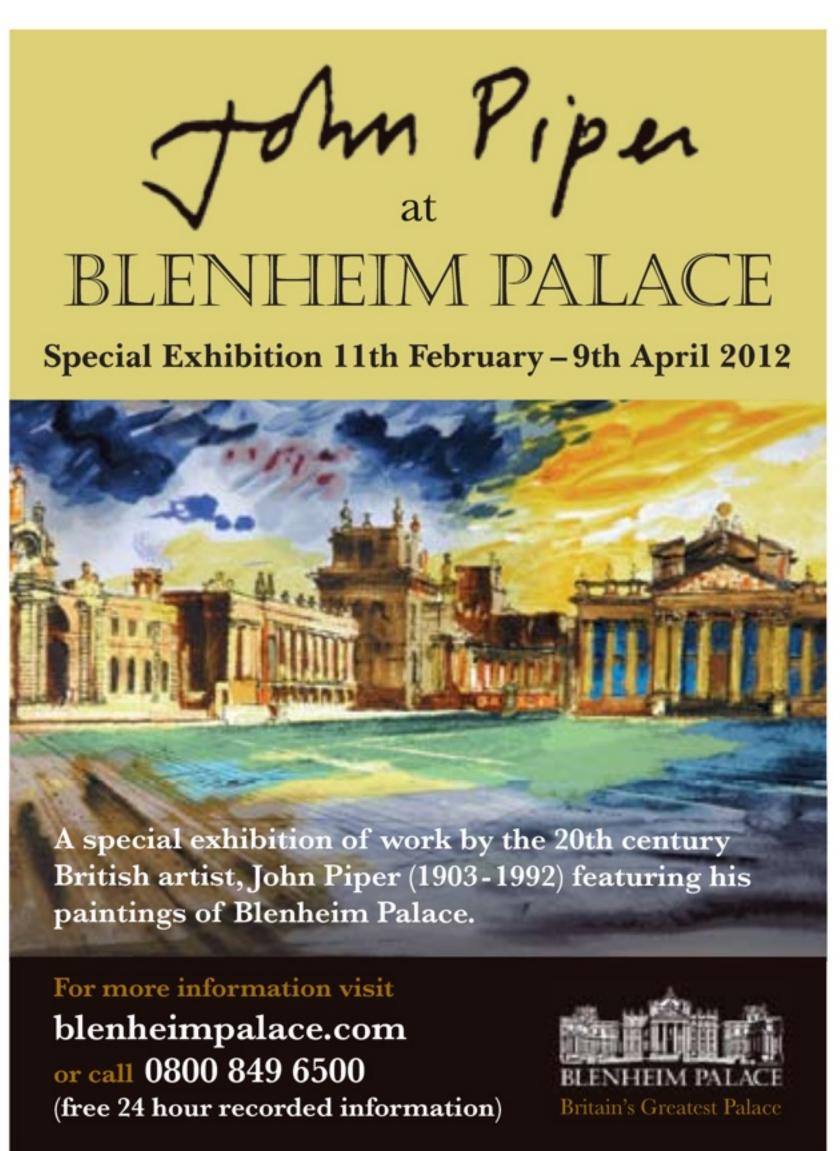
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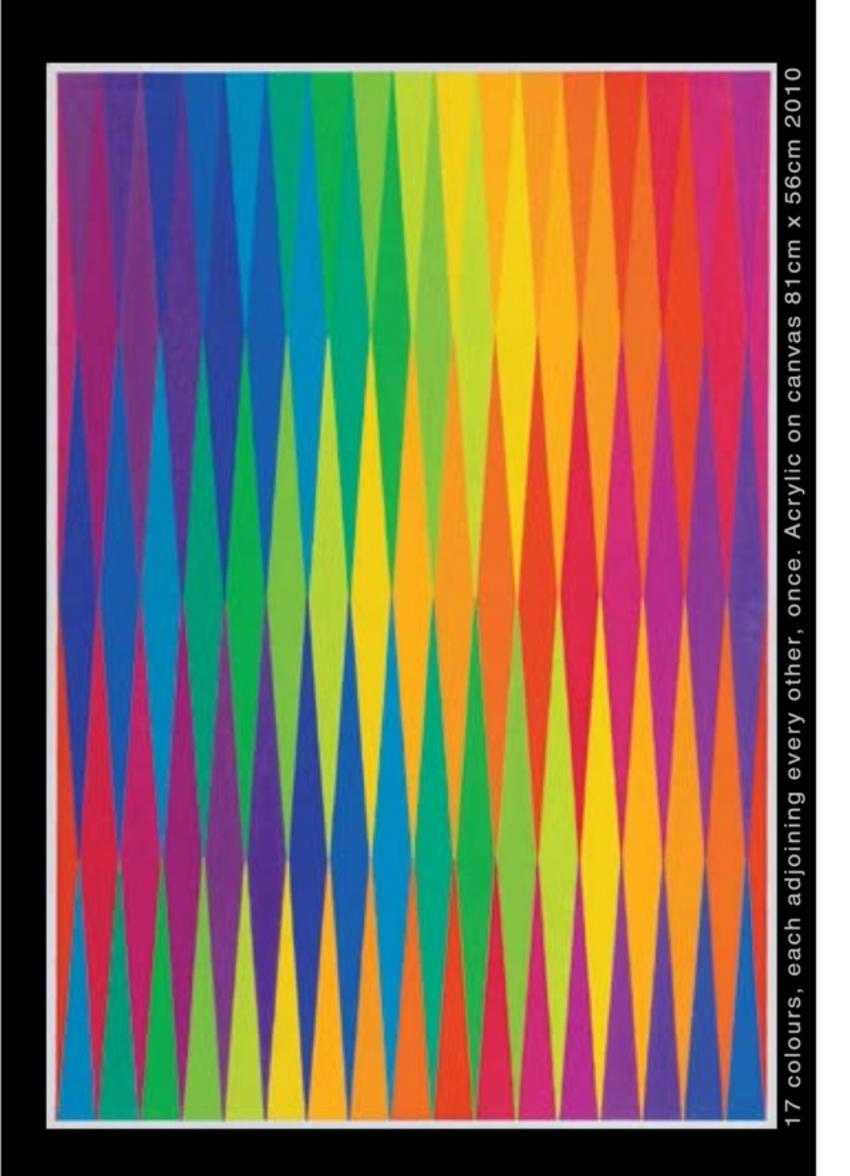








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**MODERN & CONTEMPORARY ART - DESIGN** 





reat art, according to the American poet Emily Dickinson, is what makes the hair on the back of your neck stand up. So it is with the relentlessly civic-minded performance, sculpture, installation and urban reclamation work of Theaster Gates. An artist whose unabashedly utopian yet eminently pragmatic activities make the word 'radical' sound as quaint as, say, 'cultural studies', Gates has laid daring zip lines across the canyonlike divide currently separating life and art. Today his regenerative practice is to art's newfound idealism as Dylan's Fender Telecaster was once to acoustic blues – it channels an electrifying new message about aesthetics, ethics and social change. Feel the stubble on your nape rising now?

Gates's creative approach takes as much from the privileged precincts of contemporary art as it does from his own biography. Raised in rural Mississippi and Illinois, he joined the choir of Chicago's New Cedar Grove Missionary Baptist Church when he was twelve years old. By age fourteen he was its director. In college Gates became immersed in politics: 'The

conversation of the choir seemed too narrow', he told one reporter. 'I had as much zeal for the political and social as I did for God and the choir.' In 1996 he graduated with a degree in ceramics and urban planning. A decade later – in a bid to burrow deeper into his spirituality – Gates augmented his academic work with another interdisciplinary degree that also included religious studies.

Jobs followed that at once expanded and concentrated Gates's eclectic resume. He worked as an urbanist in Seattle for a Christian mission that ran a housing programme in poor neighbourhoods. He ran an arts education nonprofit centre, Little Black Pearl, in Chicago's black community. He slogged as an arts planner

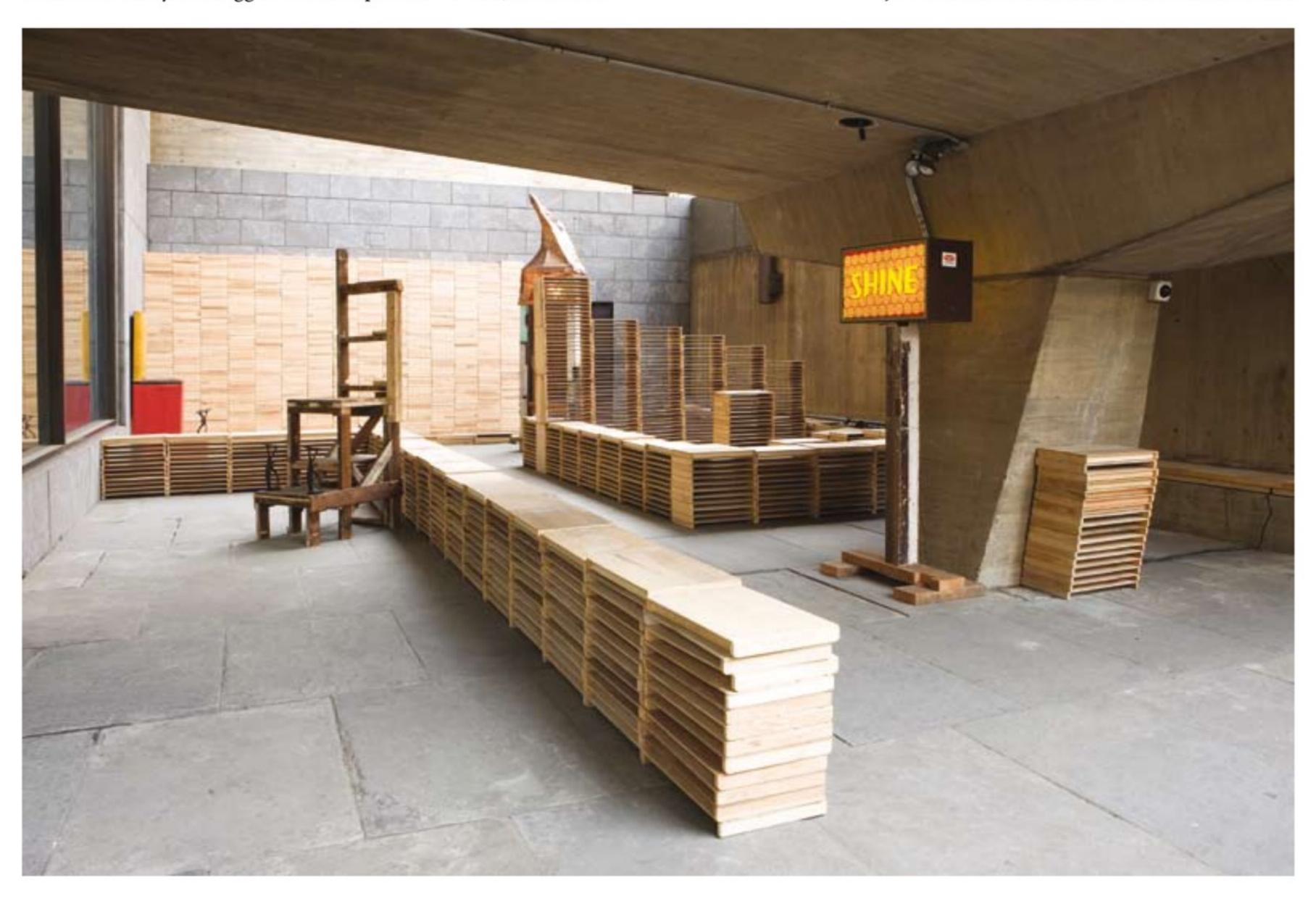
below and facing page:

Cosmology of the Yard,
2010 (installation views,
Whitney Biennial 2010, Whitney
Museum of American Art,
New York). Photo: Bill Orcutt

for the Chicago Transit Authority, a position he found bureaucratic and limiting. Eventually Gates settled into a job at the University of Chicago as a coordinator of arts programming – all the while developing a wide-ranging practice that lassoed his disparate interests into what Republican hacks might call, in keeping with the bigoted derision aimed at America's 44th President, 'community organising'.

'I'm not a social worker,' Gates has said. 'I did study urban planning because I knew that cities had problems, and black people in cities were considered the problem.' Knowing full well that the principal 'problem' affecting black people is poverty, Gates immediately embraced artmaking with a rare and savvy sense of social responsibility. But an important question loomed: how to reflect on pressing social issues while avoiding what one US historian called 'the burden of representation'? For Gates - who is more concerned with what it means to be an artist in the world than what it signifies to be a black artist in America - the answer was clear. He would, in the guise of an artistcurator-activist, serve different kinds of communities as an artistic 'bridge'. Of the many bridges Gates has laid over the years, few prove as nervy or as emblematic as those he has spanned between the black church and the contemporary museum.

'No people come into possession of a culture without having paid a heavy price for it,' James Baldwin wrote. Over the course of a brief



## IT'S EASY TO IMAGINE GATES'S SIGNATURE ARTWORK MEANINGFULI DROPPED DOWN INSIDE ONE OF EUROPE'S MAJOR BIENNIALS

but important career, Gates has raised virtual cathedrals from this sentiment. Take, for example, his 2010 one-man exhibition at the Milwaukee Art Museum. There, Gates processioned a 250person gospel choir he assembled from local churches through its galleries; they sang hymns the artist had scored as a response to poems written by a slave-era potter named Dave Drake. For his Whitney Biennial turn of the same year, Gates built a space that was part Buddhist temple and part minimalist hangout space - it hosted, among other collaborations, the artist's house band, the Black Monks of Mississippi, whose musical outpourings combine black spirituals with Zen chants. In a third instance, the artist gathered some 200 musicians and dancers to perform for 150 white academics at the University of Chicago. The performance was followed by a lecture the artist delivered himself. It was corrosively titled 'You Need Niggers?' It's fun to imagine the audience's strained eyeballs and lumpy throats.

Activities like these, however, pale before the achievements of the mother-of-all Theaster Gates enterprises, which the artist calls simply The Dorchester Projects. Begun in late 2006, when Gates purchased and rehabbed an abandoned building on 69th and Dorchester Avenue, on Chicago's

legendarily rough South Side, *The Dorchester Projects* was formulated as an evolving structure for a set of far-reaching artistic visions. Its chief mission, as defined by Gates and a team



ArtReview 69



## CATES INSTINCTIVELY KNEW THAT PLACES THAT NEED BUT CAN'T POSSIBLY AFFORD CULTURE TODAY PROVIDE CONTEMPORARY ART

WITH SOMETHING IT'S BEEN SORELY LACKING: PURPOSE.



from top:

The Dorchester Projects,
2006–, interior, Prairie Avenue
Bookstore Archive; exterior.
Photos: Peter Skvara.



of architects and designers, was not merely to integrate life and art – after all, that claim has been made by Detroit car manufacturers for years – but to do so at a juncture where creativity might, for once, get a jump on commercial interests. That crossroads, Gates judged, exists in America's inner city, a place not just looked down on by real-estate developers and city planners, but also by the culture at large. Economically, socially, culturally and spiritually – if we understand art as spirituality in paint-spattered jeans – Gates instinctively knew that places that need but can't possibly afford culture today provide contemporary art with something it's been sorely lacking: *purpose*.

Predictably, Gates turned the building on Dorchester Avenue into a haven for cultural activity. Dinners, conversations, performances, concerts and meetings followed - these included, among other happenings, choreographed meals the artist has called Plate Convergences - peopled with folks from every walk of life. The success of this first experiment in 'real-estate art' led, in quick order, to the renovation of two more structures on the block. Largely financed by the sale of artworks Gates made from materials repurposed from the buildings' demolitions - these include framed bits of cord that invoke the baptism by firehose of civil rights protesters in the 1960s, as well as thronelike shoeshine chairs the artist deploys in abrasive performances about race relations - a template emerged for what is clearly an expandable model of entrepreneurial, socially conscious art. Capacious and mobile enough to encompass other neighbourhoods and cities, Gates's signature artwork is easily imagined being meaningfully dropped down inside one of Europe's major biennials.

In creating an artist's redevelopment scheme fed by an entrepreneur's moxie, Gates has successfully finessed both the business of real estate and what Andy Warhol once called, in an age far more innocent than ours, 'business art'. A powerful argument for taking advantage of market conditions as well as municipal and federal housing grants – and further still, the artworld's reptilian guilt towards all things racially charged – Gates

has found a breach in the system that allows him (and, therefore, others) to use art's freedom and leverage to break through *haute culture*'s social cliquishness and runaway commodification. Where money will not go in Chicago's blighted inner city, Gates's project has boldly ventured. Revitalisation – artistic, commercial and psychic – has, in this fundamentally replicable case, trumped the usual capitalist calculus of risk and return.

'When I first moved to 69th and Dorchester, people were like, "You need a dog and a gun,"" Gates has said. 'There was such a stigma. And I began to wonder, "What can I do to destigmatize the place?" Besides buying up buildings and converting them into miniature cultural institutions (he filled one building with 14,000 volumes on architecture and design from a nearby bookshop that went out of business, and plans to turn another into a centre dedicated 'to the study of obsolete images'), Gates has trained and employed local folk to do the construction once executed by crews from outside the area. Today they constitute his main artistic workforce: a group made up of five men, including an exconvict, who assist on the artist's proliferating projects. Rescued from unemployment and made stewards of new cultural treasure, these individuals are a testament to the power of contemporary art reimagined from the ground up. Their persons, as much as Theaster Gates's bold new mission, signal the way out from a

commercial blueprint of dead-end streets.:

from top:
In Event of Race Riot (Green,
Wood, Tile), 2011, wood, glass,
hose, 152 x 117 x 11 cm; Panther,
2011, black cement, glass, plaster,
36 x 36 x 97 cm

all images: courtesy the artist and Kavi Gupta, Chicago & Berlin



ArtReview 71

## HEIDI SPECKER

GIORGIO DE CHIRICO, Einstein's theory of relativity, extremely precise atomic clocks, A SUBJECTIVE SENSE OF TIME, falling in love, Eadweard Muybridge, repetition, TWO BILLIARD BALLS, life after death, the lack of an ultimate answer









ollowing her artist's project in ArtReview issue 55, photographer Heidi Specker sought answers to some of the questions regarding time that the project – featuring photographs of a clock that appeared to give different times on its four faces – provoked. Particle physicist Bruno Mansoulié came up with some answers.

### Heidi Specker

I spent last year in Rome, and during this period I became more and more interested in Surrealism and began to think about how fiction could operate within my work. I visited the studio of Giorgio de Chirico at the Piazza di Spagna, and that became the epicentre for my research. Surrealism to de Chirico meant metaphysical painting, a term that he brought into art. As an artist, of course, I am familiar with metalanguages and the process of transforming ideas into concepts and into a visual language. And as a photographer I am familiar with physical and technical questions about time (exposure and development) and space (the transfer from three dimensions to two). And so I would like to talk to you about the concept of time as it relates to my photographic series Termini [2010], photographs of a public clock in the EUR district of Rome. How does time operate in images like these? And can you tell me what time it is?

### Bruno Mansoulié

Yes, of course! Synchronising clocks all over the planet was not a small problem, but if Einstein's theory of relativity is correct (and we still believe it is), then the problem is solved, and humans have agreed on a common convention (to a very high degree of accuracy). So that's why I can answer yes. But of course our way of speaking about 'telling the time' is only a convention. It does not say anything about the nature of time, why we cannot travel in it and so on.

HS What do you mean when you say 'the nature of time'? Is it part of the nature of time that we cannot travel in it? And what, then, am I simulating in my four images?

Well, there are a lot of ways to answer your question. On a materialistic, scientific level, your photographs of clocks showing different times are only a symbol. The reality is that the city workers forgot to set the clocks on time or that some of the

clocks don't work. When you were there you could have looked at your watch and known the time. At this level, the real scientific time for you, a human walking at low speed on the piazza, would not be ambiguous. You could wear a watch synchronised automatically (by GPS) to extremely precise atomic clocks. But even at this materialistic level, there are some questions: first, if you were sitting on a particle crossing the piazza with a speed of a sizeable fraction of the velocity of light (like the recent neutrinos from CERN, which are detected somewhere in Italy... but not in a piazza in Rome!), the synchronisation question would be much more subtle. As I already said, it is supposedly solved by Einstein's theory of relativity, but it is far from trivial.

## BRUNO MANSOULE

this page, from top: **Heidi Specker**, *Ultimatum alla Terra I, IV, III, II*, 2010

facing page: **Heidi Specker**, Piazza di Spagna 31, Motiv II, 2010, digital fine art print, 210 x 152 cm

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Images of clocks indicating different times are often used as a symbol to remind students or public audiences that 'simultaneity' is a complex issue in modern physics. (But of course it's not very usual to show clocks indicating such different times...) I think that this 'relativity of time' influenced Dalí rather than de Chirico. It is often said (but I don't know if it is true) that Dalí's melting clocks were inspired by the theory of relativity.

HS I guess the obvious difference between Dalí's clocks and mine is that Dalí's are melting and mine are frozen in the sense of a frozen moment. My photographs work in the way that they don't change the object of the clock but rather 'unsharpen' the sense of time itself. The single moment in each photograph is recorded, but through the recombination of several moments – in this case four images – time itself is questioned. This is my strategy of fragmentation and working with details and particles during the production process.

Of course, there are images like my self-portrait *Auto Sex*, or *Prati* in *Termini* [both 2010], in which the surface of the image seems to be liquid or as though it is melting, but I don't want to compare photography with painting. Behind these images lies the idea of visualising a kind of matrix or an interface, something that could be physical or mental.

BM This is quite interesting: in the modern theory of interactions between particles (quantum field theory), there is the notion of the S-matrix. The S-matrix is very similar to what you describe: you may ignore the details of the interaction; you just have to describe how the final state (the particles after the interaction) is related to the initial state. During the interaction, several elementary processes can take place, and you need not even know how they are ordered in time. Due to quantum physics, there are uncertainties in all quantities, including time and the time ordering of processes. However, in the 'real' world, these uncertainties are only present at very small scales (small distances and/or short times), and everything returns to the normal cause-and-effect ordering for macroscopic objects... and for us. From there it is more your part, as an artist, to question if this indeterminacy of time extends to our usual world.

HS As an artist, the first decision I make concerns the tools I work with and the media I am working in. To operate with photography always means to work with copies, images of reality. This connection to the 'real' world makes photography quite interesting in terms of representation and the presentation of reality. In painting the interaction of the artist is very obvious; in photography it is at a different level.

**BM** This might relate to the second way one could discuss the nature of time - while time has a 'reality' at the materialistic, scientific level, there's also the issue of how it is experienced psychologically. Here I am somewhat away from my field, but I enjoy the frontiers of science and psychology (and ethnology). It is clear that each of us has a subjective sense of time, and that this time does not flow at the same speed for different people or for different events. Usual examples are in the sentimental area, like falling in love or witnessing the death of a close person. But there are other examples, like in sports. Take a vault jumper, for example: there are many gestures to accomplish during the vault. For a trained jumper, the time of the vault jump is stretched enormously compared to a normal observer. All the training enables the jumper to be aware of positions, actions, in time intervals much smaller than a nontrained person. It could also be that in any single person's mind there are several psychological times flowing independently - think of a long-term project alongside immediate actions, or a friend that we find irritating every day but we know we will keep for life.

**HS** In the history of photography, Eadweard Muybridge is known for his important studies of the movements of animal and human bodies - his horses in motion, for example. He immediately came to my mind when you described the vault jumper. Here, though, the main focus is the linearity of the single moments. In my work, the timeline of production moments is not coherent with the presentation as a tableau of different moments, as in Teilchentheorie [1998] or Termini. I think Muybridge and myself both want to transmit special information. His way was via linearity, my way is antilinear. I was looking for this clock in Rome for six months until I found it.

BM I know Muybridge's work. But this is an external observation, right? I was speaking more about subjective time. I have the impression that in the minds of most people, time is flowing linearly, or at least continuously. In physics this is the case, at least for times longer than some quantum limits (very, very short times). But again in this respect, it is your role to question this natural 'feeling' of a smooth, linear time...

**HS** Muybridge's concept was to record something in the way of showing things not usually visible by taking advantage of the technical

# AS AIN ARTIST, THE FIRST DECISION I MAKE CONCERNS THE TOOLS ND MEDIATAM ORKING IN: TO OPERATE WITH PHOTOGRAPHY MEANS TO WORK WITH COPIES

possibilities of photography. But as you say, it's an external view of a subject. And when we are talking about internal or subjective positions, we are discussing a different invisibility. Of course, I am recording also, but with the idea of putting single images together later by cutting into the timeline. But at the end, the aesthetic of these selections or additions rebuilds a natural 'feeling', and this establishes a kind of linear time again. A linear time in the sense that it allows for empathy; without that, it would not be understandable or possible to read. As you know now, I like to work with repetition. Repetition is also a method of deleting the timeline. Repeating a similar

facing page: **Heidi Specker**, Cavour, 2010, digital fine art print, 210 x 152 cm

moment. There are no hints of past and future in the recording. In Muybridge's work there are long tracks and series. In my work there is often a left and right, a line of images that reconstruct a before and after. A fictional timeline of perception.

- BM The big question is the irreversibility of time. The laws of physics are almost all time-reversible, meaning that if you shoot a film of a physics phenomenon and replay the film backwards, it will still describe a possible, meaningful physics phenomenon. For example, if you film the collision of two billiard balls, and show the film to a public once forward, and once backwards, the public will not be able to tell which is the right one.
- What you are describing with this example is a kind of cloudiness. What if the billiard balls were earth or the universe are we going to an end or to a beginning or to a restart? And for the single human being, this touches on the question of death or life after death.
- BM Well, the question of reversibility is actually more simple and concrete. Billiard ball collisions are 'reversible' ie, if you play the film in reverse, you still see a valid collision. If all physics laws behaved in this way, there would be no matter left in the universe. So the question here is not one of 'cloudiness', but of knowing precisely what kind of interaction (or force) 'knows' that time is flowing forward or backwards...

For the universe – well, according to the latest measurements, we believe that it will not come to a sudden end (like a 'big crunch') but rather it will become larger and larger, more and more diluted, and colder and colder. A rather sad 'end', in a way...

# THE MORE I KNOW ABOUT THE WORLD, THE MORE I FEEL THE LACK OF AN ULTIMATE ANSWER

- HS Thinking about the irreversibility of time, the decay time of nuclear atoms comes to my mind. Human beings are creating a huge task for future generations a process which is irreversible.
- BM Well, this is a delicate topic. You may also be concerned about global warming, which is also a threat to future generations (and mostly for the poorer parts of the world). Personally, as a physicist I can only regret that on all sides the debate is often nonrational, and people follow prejudices without really looking into the problems. For example, we know that there are ways to convert the long-lifetime products to medium-lifetime ones. Or to produce nuclear energy with much less waste. But to study it would need long-term political investment, and no a priori rejection from the other side. In the present state of debate, we have only two possibilities: a 'dirty' nuclear power, or burning enormous amounts of coal...
- **HS** Do the results in your work calm you down, or are they disturbing to you?
- **BM** This is a good question. I would answer 'both'. It depends if I think of the core of the knowledge or of its limits.

For the core, the bulk, it is rather reassuring to know that we have a rather good model of 'the world'. In the last 25 years, the model has

become unified and now includes a very large range, from particles to the whole universe. One of the main merits is that it allows all humans to speak about nature in a nonbiased way, irrespective of national or religious prejudices. I am optimistic that it will play a big role for peace and tolerance.

When I think of the limits, the frontiers, this is another story. The more I know about the world – the closer we get to the Big Bang, for example, or to the nature of matter – the more I feel the lack of an ultimate answer to eternal questions: what is it all? What are we doing here? Being a physicist certainly puts me in an uncomfortable position. It is my job to search for answers. Certainly I know more than the average person about the Big Bang, the origin of matter, mass and so on, and yet I fail to really provide such an answer.

The more we learn, the more there is to learn. This is like Sisyphus. But as Camus said, "*Il faut imaginer Sisyphe heureux*..." [one should imagine Sisyphus as happy]!

Of course, I could ask you the same question! Do you find some serenity from your work?

HS Coming to Italy with the romantic idea of Goethe and his Grand Tour, I found serenity soon and decided to name the work *Termini*, focusing on the final station, the final destination. I always tried to get around Sisyphus.

But apart from that, I would like to think more generally about two realities, the outside and the inside, the universe and the ego (soul). Perhaps they are like twins: if one feels confused, the other is confused too. Or a better example could be a mirror: it's impossible to say if the universe is mirroring me or if I am mirroring the universe. At the end you and I are mirrors. In Germany we say, 'As one calls into the forest, so shall it echo'. And as Nico sang, 'I'll be your mirror'.:

Bruno Mansoulié has contributed to the exhibition Mathematics: A Beautiful Elsewhere at the Cartier Foundation, Paris, through 18 March. Heidi Specker: Termini is on view at the Leopold Hoesch Museum, Düren, from 11 March to 8 May

facing page: **Heidi Specker**, Cavour II, 2010, digital fine art print, 210 x 152 cm

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Laura Oldfield Ford, Leytonstone 1995 1999 2012, Pen on paper, 2010/11
© The Artist. Courtesy Hales Gallery, London

### There is a Place...

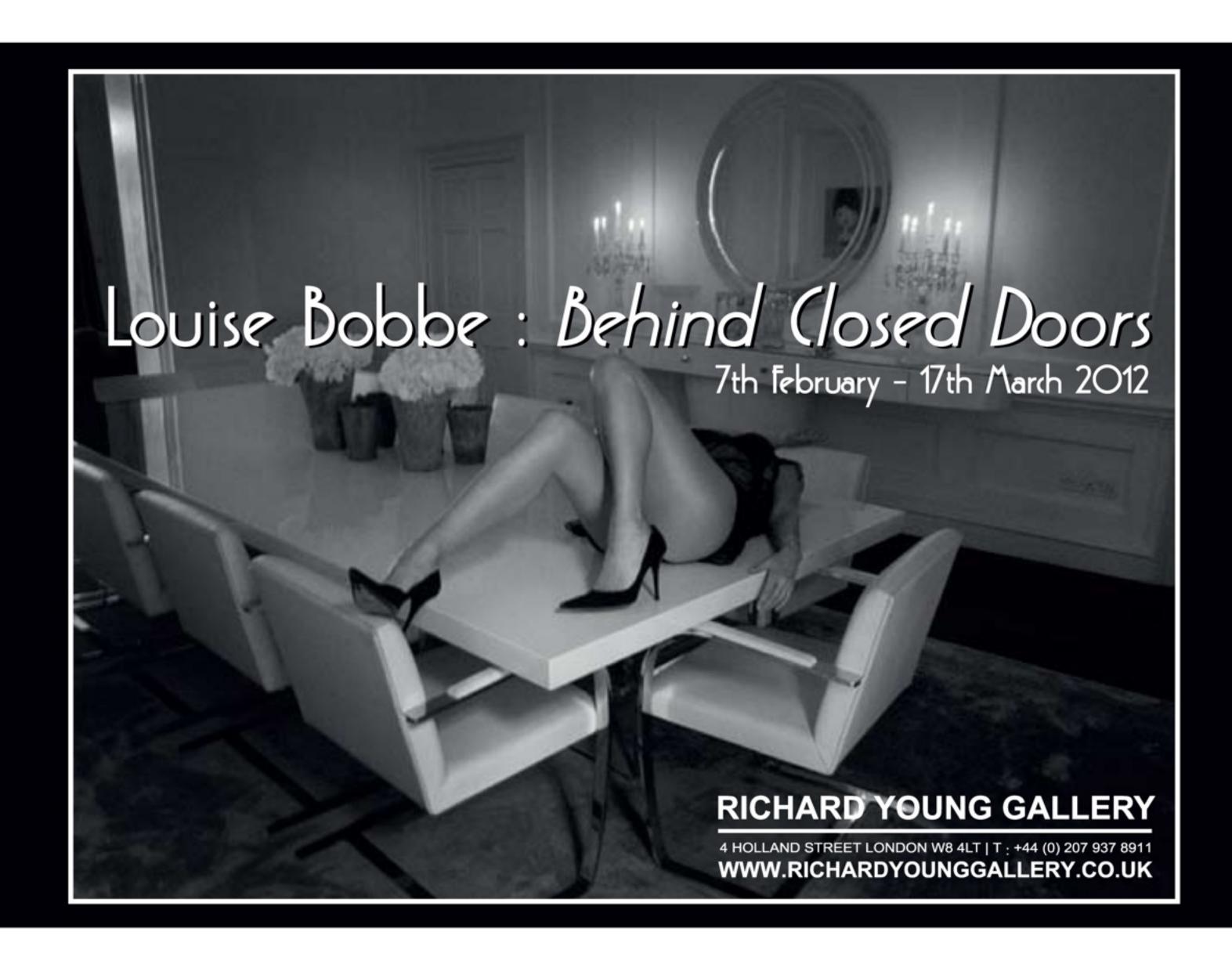
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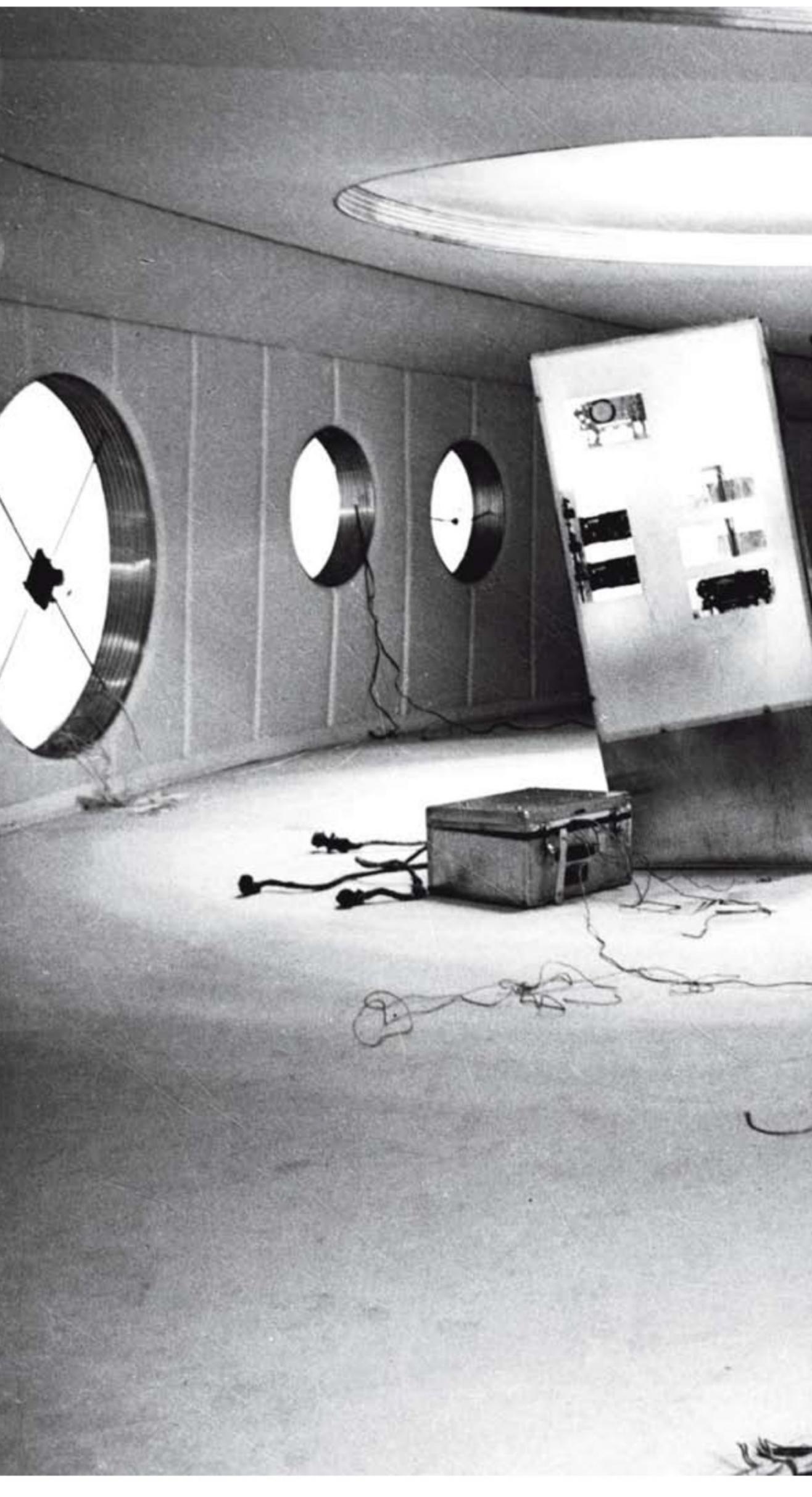






tanislaw Lem spent almost all his life (which spanned the years 1921 to 2006) in the Polish city of Kraków. At the time of his death he was living at 66 Ulica Narwick (Narwick Street), which is the address I enter into the GPS of my rented Skoda. And in its robotic female voice, the little machine encourages me, starting from the city centre, to head directly south in the direction of the Carpathian Mountains.

Past the McDrive and skirting a Komfort furniture store, you're on one of the expressways out of town. After several kilometres, you've entered the classic 'countryside' of a large European city: a suburb of wasteland and car





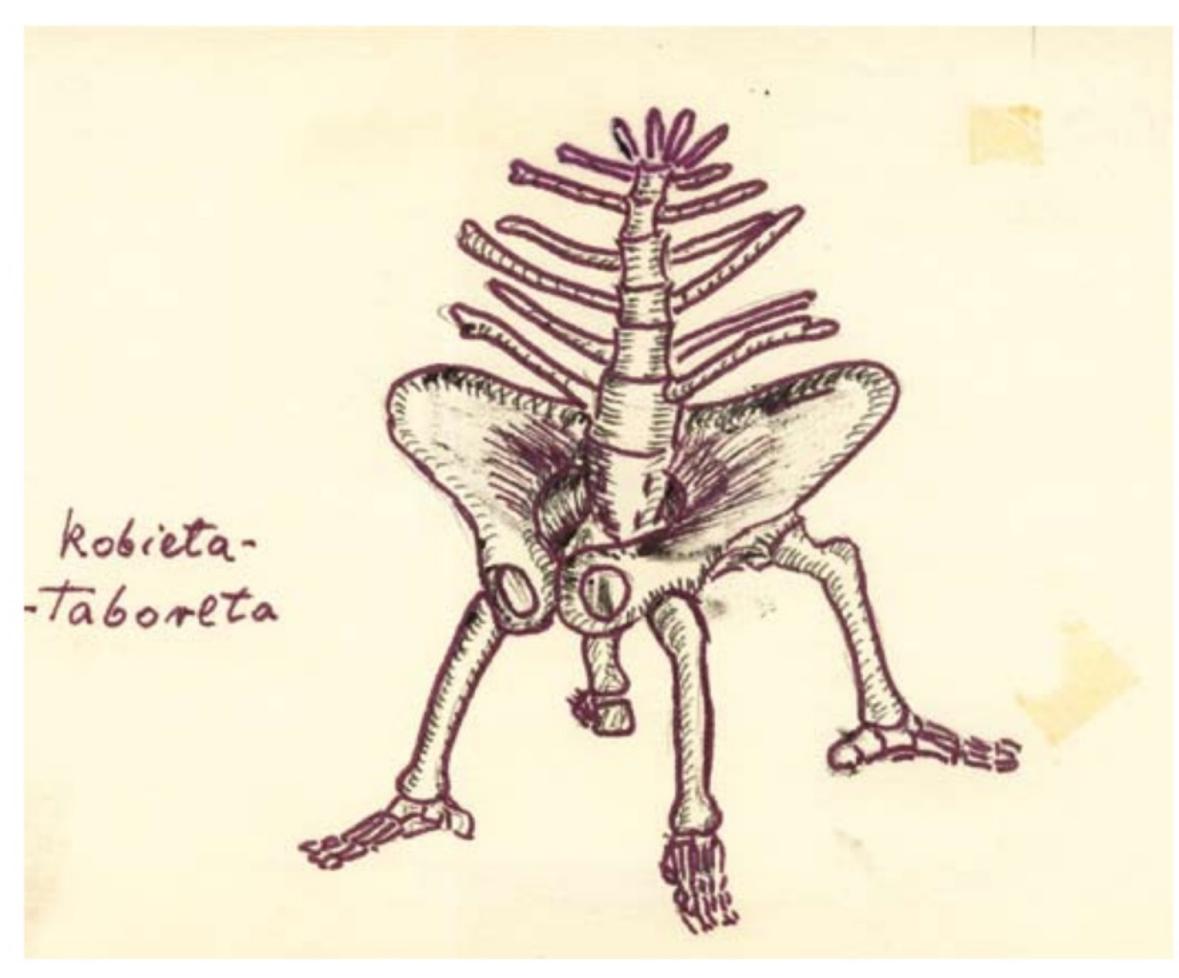
parks, punctuated by warehouses and shops. Streetlamps are arranged at regular intervals, and the standard road signs are your constant companions. On your left, the Cinecity, several Autoservis, and branches of the Carrefour hypermarket and Villa Dermatica (a chain of beauty salons). It's nine in the evening and night is falling. Mercedes, BMWs, Fiats or Peugeots circulate with you. Nothing remains of what was once the Soviet Empire. You could be on the outskirts of Berlin, Milan or Paris.

I turn left at the Toyota garage and the GPS insists I have now arrived at my destination. I see nothing: the beginning of the countryside, a field of sunflowers. I make a U-turn in the forecourt of a disused railway station: there's not a single light; it's a spatiotemporal cul-de-sac. When I reach Ulica Kapi Elowa the GPS robotically orders me to go back down the dual carriageway. I'm lost in a residential maze. I ask directions from two women in front of a coquettish house. They reply in a human voice - that is, with all the hesitancy of human beings - that Ulica Narwick is on the other side of the expressway. And did they know Stanislaw Lem? I enquire. They reply in the negative. "He lives here?" they ask in English. I don't reply. Like a character in one of his books, I'm late for an appointment. With a dead man.

When I reach it, Narwick is a narrow but chic street filled with large villas protected by high walls. The house numbers go up as erratically as in the labyrinthine cities of the future invented by Lem. As I finally reach the 60s, the GPS repeats, You have arrived at your destination, its voice as disembodied as that of the robot navigator from Lem's most famous novel, Solaris (1961): 'Station Solaris calling! The capsule will land at zero-hour. I repeat... Zero and zero. The capsule has landed. Out.'

I get out of the car in front of a tall ochrecoloured house. There's no number and the dark windows are shuttered with grilles. The only thing I see is 'Solaria' spelled out in large red letters. One side of the house borders the expressway and opposite it, right in front of me, is a tanning salon. Next to the sign, a gigantic half-naked woman, kitsch in the extreme, promises the delivery of a jaw-droppingly natural tone thanks to ultramodern Solarex lamps. And at that moment, if this institution really is named after the novel penned by its onetime neighbour, I'd be absolutely prepared to lie down under the UVA-UVB rays.

Nevertheless, ruptures and coincidences are an essential motif of Lem's work. The slippage between worlds allowed him to talk about reality under the cover of fiction. Many Eastern Bloc writers used science fiction in order to speak of the present. Lem's stories take place in the future or in space, but are full of back ways and hidden passages into the world he inhabited – the Soviet world of bureaucratic, administrative absurdity, a world in which chaos seizes the workings of a system sliding into delirium. The Russian science-



# THE ARTS, LITERATURE, WHAT IS THEIR TRUE PURPOSE? DIVERSION!' - 'DIVERSION FROM HAT?' - 'YOU DON'T KNOW?' - 'NO.' -

above: **A Stoolmaid**, drawing by Stanislaw Lem from his short-story collection **The Star Diaries** (1976). © Barbara and Tomasz Lem

below: **Stanislaw Lem** with a toy cosmonaut, 1966. © Barbara and Tomasz Lem



fiction writer Yevgeny Zamyatin had been the first to exploit this - his We (written in 1921, but only published in 1924 once it had been smuggled to the West) imagined a dystopian future as a means of critiquing the obligatory happiness of Bolshevism. Similarly, one could read Lem's Memoirs Found in a Bathtub (1961) as a ferocious satire on the Communist administration: 'a community that refused to allow the infiltration of any news of real events'. Of an interstellar complexity for readers today, the first 12 pages of the book were above all, I think, designed to discourage Polish censors: in spite of the relative détente of the 'Polish October', Lem was obliged to disguise the political charge of his novel within a 'futile' imaginary timeline. His caution is understandable: following the publication of We, Zamyatin had been exiled from the Soviet Union.

Misunderstandings about such tactics would weigh heavily on the reception of Lem's work in the West: his classification as a science-fiction writer ghettoises him to this day, even if *Solaris* is a great work of world literature – an equal to the 1969 work *Slaughterhouse-Five*, by Kurt Vonnegut (another writer who suffers from an absurd classification as a science-fiction writer). Lem himself had nothing but contempt for SF authors, with the notable exception of Philip K. Dick. Indeed, his tangles with the Science

Fiction Writers of America (SFWA) organisation, who wanted to give Lem an honorary membership, seem even more ironic than his novels: Lem wanted above all not to be pigeonholed as an SF author, and his refusal provoked an imbroglio of funny and pathetic misunderstandings that recall a recurring theme of his books – that the notion of communication between worlds is one of humanity's wilder utopian dreams.

Towards the end of his life Lem rejected literature for science. Unfortunately for Lem his books fell into the hands of my astrophysicist husband, who accompanied me on the Kraków expedition. I have had, by chance and by preference, a lot of experience with 'proper' scientists, and when they read novels they want to find out about life on earth – about human psychology and love in particular – not antimatter as it is perceived by novelists.

If Lem managed to summarise, in a sentence in *Solaris*, the violent age to which we belong ('deaths without burial are not uncommon in our time'), he predicted a lot of other things as well: laptop computers; mass terrorism, including the destruction of giant buildings by religious fanatics (*The Futurological Congress*, 1971); climate change (he imagined a gradual cooling). Although he was mistaken, along with many statisticians, when it came to global overpopulation, predicting thirty billion humans in 2039. He has also inspired numerous authors of both novels and films. The double-bottomed universe described in *The Futurological Congress* ('The people think they



Two film stills from **Solaris**, 1972, dir Andrei Tarkovsky. Courtesy Artificial Eye, London



are going to a beautiful glass green-house orangery; upon entering they are given vigilax and become aware of the bare concrete walls and the workbenches... and when they've finished, a spoonful of amnesol, perhaps nepethanol, is sufficient to erase everything that was seen!') presaged *The Matrix* (1999).

Some 50 years after the publication of *The* Trial, Lem's ironic depiction of the paranoia of the Communist system extended Kafka's thinking to its logical limit. Lem described a world in which Kafka had become synonymous with reality. The former's characters encounter 'matters so secret' that none of them knows what they are supposed to be concealing; these are coupled with surveillance and security procedures that are as random as the assassinations that keep occurring throughout Memoirs Found in a Bathtub. It's a world become entirely random, mechanical and disordered, where sense is nonsense, where no one is sitting at the controls: 'Gibberish', says an old soldier in Memoirs. 'The arts, literature, what is their true purpose? Diversion!' - 'Diversion from what?' - 'You don't know?' - 'No.' - 'You should.' But no one does...

Lem's most beautiful passages go far beyond satire: they involve the invention of an organic, living ocean that sends to cosmonauts in distress the ghost of whomever they miss the most. Lem defended himself as having written, in Solaris, a psychological novel. In old-grumbler mode, he liked neither Steven Soderbergh's sentimental film version of 2002, nor the far too 'crime and punishment' (in Lem's opinion) 1972 version by Andrei Tarkovsky. This ocean, made of a strange organic matter, is an enigma for those explorers who venture onto its shores. Solaris wants nothing from us save to perform quickly abandoned experiments on us, to take on forms mined from our memories, to leave us with the faint hope that 'the time of cruel miracles was not past' (in the sublime last words of Solaris).

If there is one thing that's perhaps lacking in this novel, it's an acceptance that it is a novel; a willingness to let go, to wander in the poetic sphere alone, renouncing scientific theory; to let this formidable romantic universe proliferate: the ocean that thinks, but which thinks without us. Artistically, the overestimation of scientific truth was Lem's limit, but he left us a reservoir of new forms, images that generate dreams, often barely sketched and still to be explored.

For several years I've had the strong desire to write science fiction. Leaving Kraków, leaving this unknown street where all I saw was this strange word, 'Solaria', I had found out nothing new about Lem. I could have stayed in Paris. And yet, from this Polish suburb I take the feeling of a journey into another world, at once familiar and yet doubled, erratic and harrowing. A different Europe inhabited by spectres and coincidences. An unresolved space between history and the present: an enigma that science fiction, as a serious genre, is capable of describing with relevance.:

# SUSSIMANN AND THE RUFUS CORPORATION



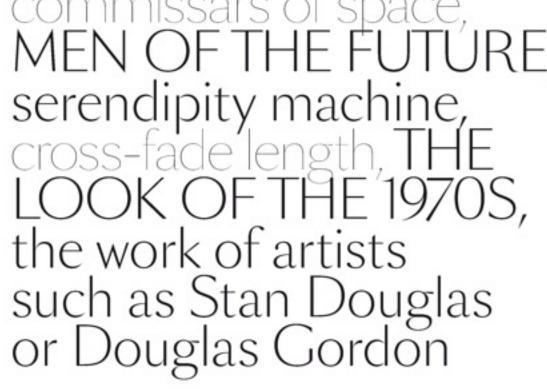
he question of why Kazimir Malevich, painter of the Black Square (1915), inventor of Suprematism, plowhead of Russian Modernism and sacrifice of the Soviet avant-garde, turned, or rather returned, during the 1930s, to painting odd, faceless, geometricised peasants has yet to be answered fully or forcefully. That this self-proclaimed 'commissar of space', who had once enlisted himself with Velimir Khlebnikov and Aleksei Kruchenykh - the 'men of the future' (budetliane) - in a battle to gain 'victory over the sun', retreated to the precincts of indigenous mysticism and donned the vestments of religion (Malevich's final self-portrait, from 1933, shows the artist as church father) troubles any mind that desires the genuine venture of thought, be it artistic, scientific or intellectual breakthrough, to open onto the promise of some future free from the shackles of the present, let alone the past. And yet perhaps what Malevich was grappling with during the 1930s was not so much the past as a different conception of the future, and how one could get there.

Malevich, the good modernist, had a time problem, and at its root was film. Caught out by Sergei Eisenstein's and Dziga Vertov's masterworks of the 1920s, and with them the rise of filmic and photographic montage

as the inevitable visual language of the revolution, Malevich's commitment to painting could only appear quaint at best and counterrevolutionary at worst. Art historian Margarita Tupitsyn has argued convincingly however that even by 1920 Malevich had begun thinking filmically. In the small booklet *Suprematism: 34 Drawings*, published that year, Malevich projected one abstract sketch after another within, or rather upon, a drawn frame. Like a film, Malevich saw this work as 'one piece, with no visible joints' – he called it a 'suprematist apparatus'. 'It was a mechanism', Tupitsyn says, 'meant to operate without its inventor'.¹

Like their previous two films, 89 Seconds at Alcázar (2004), a dilation of the moment depicted in Velázquez's Las Meninas (1656), and The Rape of the Sabine Women (2006), which dramatises the suspension of time pictured in that painting (by Rubens) and its cognates (by David), the latest film by Eve Sussman and the Rufus Corporation (her ever-evolving studio of collaborators), whiteonwhite:algorithmicnoir (2011), which completes the trilogy, nods in the direction of another painting – Malevich's Composition: White on White (1918). And it, too, is a mechanism that operates without its inventor.

Leaving aside for a moment just what the film may be about, whiteonwhite's 'apparatus' consists of 30-plus hours of video, film, music and voiceovers, all of which have been captured as digital files and tagged with terms - 'dance', 'white', 'past', 'future', 'happy', 'mission', 'surveillance' - that relate, sometimes directly, but most of the time only loosely, to their contents. These files are then given over to an algorithm that Sussman and her programmer, Jeff Garneau, have taken to calling 'the serendipity machine', which uses those tags and other metadata in the digital files to determine what to play, when to play it and for how long. The algorithm's many variables ('CROSSFADE\_LENGTH=' or 'RANDOMIZE=' or 'VOICEOVER INTERRUPTS\_VIDEO=', to name just a few) can be set or 'tuned' to different values, so that the



words JONATHAN T.D. NEIL



<sup>1</sup> See Margarita Tupitsyn, Malevich and Film (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, in association with Fundação Centro Cultural de Belém, 2002), 25.

left: whiteonwhite: algorithmicnoir, 2011



left: whiteonwhite: algorithmicnoir, 2011

below: whiteonwhite: algorithmicnoir, 2011

film emerges as a function of the algorithm that generates or edits, in real time, the ordering of images and sounds that the audience sees and hears, and so experiences, as the work.

There is no beginning or middle or end to whiteonwhite, nor is there any potential for systematic repetitions (as one finds in the temporally extended but ultimately looped work of artists such as Stan Douglas or Douglas Gordon). There does remain, however, a narrative arc. But it is an arc that belongs neither wholly to the film (there is no finished thing that can be called that) nor to the audience. As filmmaker Hollis Frampton once noted, no matter how abstract or repetitious the work (but especially with abstract and repetitious work), the viewer always projects the arc of her own experience, from initial engagement, to subtle distraction, to not-so-subtle boredom, to anticipation of - indeed often hope for - an ending. This is not at all what it is like to watch whiteonwhite, because the experience of watching it is, to say the least, engrossing, if not actually entertaining.

The film's clips, shot over the course of two years in Kazakhstan, reveal what Sussman terms a 'portrait of capitalism', but 'capitalist uncanny' might be more apt. Sussman's cameras have captured a sublime landscape (urban, industrial, rural, with no clear demarcations between) that is being stretched across an event horizon separating the vacuum of a once-slow-moving communist economy from the rapidly accelerating market for the region's untapped natural resources and all the wealth that goes with them. Which is why much of the film looks like it was shot and takes place during the 1970s, even as signs of the future (our own present) crop up in such things as new car models and all-glass office towers.

Such uneven developments lie at the core of the action, too. We learn, for example, that a geophysicist, Mr Holz, played by Jeff Wood, may or may not have some work to do for the New Method Oil Well Cementing Company (apparently Halliburton's original corporate name). Just what Holz is meant to do is never very clear, nor is it

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ever clear just what New Method is after. We see Holz in a 1960s-era control room and out in a desert populated by oil pumps. We see Holz in the office of Yuri Gagarin (the first man in space) imagining the ascent of a model rocket. There is, in voiceover, talk of water desalination. There is talk of lithium in the water supply to pacify the population of the fictional City-A (played by the Kazakh city of Aktau, à la Paris in Godard's Alphaville, from 1965). There is talk of the city as a machine. There is talk with a mysterious female 'dispatch'. There is talk of a diminishing vocabulary and a diminished memory, which Holz makes up for through the use of an old reel-to-reel tape recorder. There is talk, by one Mr White, a superior at New Method, of those tapes holding more than Holz lets on. And there is talk about how time in City-A, and for Mr Holz, isn't adding up.

Because of all this, and in classic noir fashion, Holz often appears lost to himself. He is disconnected from his own agency, seemingly a pawn of some mystery intelligence that moves him across the bleak game board of the film. It's as if he can't be sure that the decisions he is making or the actions he is taking are his own or someone



else's. And so Holz becomes an allegory of the apparatus of whiteonwhite itself. He is a shuttle passing back and forth between making sense of his situation – just as the viewer attempts to make sense of what is unfolding on the screen – and coming to terms with the fact that there may be no sense at all to be made. After all, it is only a machine that is doing the

unfolding. As one voiceover says in the film, "You are wrong, Mr Holz, our city is not a machine." But of course it's the machine that has chosen for us to hear this, and again, it's a machine that operates without its inventor.<sup>2</sup>

Like the alien planet of Stanislaw Lem's Solaris (1961), whiteonwhite is a surface with no 'inside' to which we might ascribe a rationale, a motive, a reason for acting, even as it displays, like Lem's planet, fascinating yet fleeting architectures and zones and scenes that would seem to be put there for the purpose of our aesthetic satiation. In a sense, the world of whiteonwhite must remain wholly inscrutable to us. It stands as some radically other thing because we cannot access the intelligence behind it, perhaps like the radically Other itself, be it Lem's alien being or the Absolute. As Lem writes in Solaris, 'Where there are no men, there cannot be motives accessible to men. Before we can proceed with our research, either our own thoughts or their materialized forms must be destroyed.' One imagines Malevich writing this in 1915.

But it is Jeff Wood (Mr Holz), writing in an online travelogue that he and Sussman kept of their shooting trips to Central Asia in 2008, who both echoes and extends Lem's epistemology and makes the return to Malevich explicit: 'It is possible, reflecting on the torture that one must endure in the effortlessness of space, it is possible to imagine an inverse of Malevich's all-reflecting and annihilating Black Square. That is, by annihilating oneself, and one's attachments to the most fundamental elements of life: gravity, atmospheric pressure, endemic supply of oxygen and nitrogen... by annihilating oneself, we may attain the most iconic, aerial and representational vision possible: the Earth, real and abstract.' Composition: White on White was that inverse. It marked the beginning of Malevich's return to earth, via those peasants, at once 'real and abstract', whose remit it had always been to work and live within its limits.

This, then, is what I take whiteonwhite to be about: as a 'portrait of capitalism', it is a picture of, to use Susan Buck-Morss's phrase, the 'dreamworld and catastrophe' of our new nature - an environment so totally suffused and saddled with the ambitions and outcomes of human action that it is impossible to imagine such action taking place against a backdrop that is still somehow alien to it. There is no more undiscovered country here. In scene after scene in whiteonwhite, what remains of the natural world (steppe, mountains, seascapes) all bears the stamp of human mismanagement (whip-scar roadways, forgotten and defunct equipment, brackish waters). It's beautiful, but it's a beauty drained of hope.

<sup>2</sup> With all of this I am tempted to note that Sussman's whiteonwhite: algorithmicnoir, as a 'portrait of capitalism' and at the same time a portrait of the character Holz, stands diametrically opposed to Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno's Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait (2006), at least as the eminent critic Michael Fried understands it. In that film, the 'subject', Zinédine Zidane, the celebrated France and Real Madrid footballer, is captured by 17 different cameras that follow his every movement and action, both on and off the ball, during a home match against rival Spanish club Villareal. For Fried, Gordon and Parreno's film offers an undeniable extension of what he calls the 'absorptive tradition' that began in the eighteenth century with artists such as Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin and Jean-Baptiste Greuze, insofar as the film pictures Zidane's total attention to and immersion in the match, even as the film reveals, through subtitles and camerawork, how he must be acutely aware of being watched by thousands of fans in the stadium and millions of TV viewers at home. The portrait that Gordon and Parreno 'paint' - and it is important that the total control that Zidane exhibits on the field is mirrored by the precise directorial control Gordon and Parreno exert over their film is one of this dual 'mindedness', which at once glorifies and reveals the ultimate fragility of such self-possession. However else Holz's mindedness might be characterised, one wouldn't call it self-possession. Holz is equally and undeniably absorbed in the world of whiteonwhite, but whatever 'self' he might possess, he certainly isn't in control of it, and it is questionable whether it is even his to begin with.



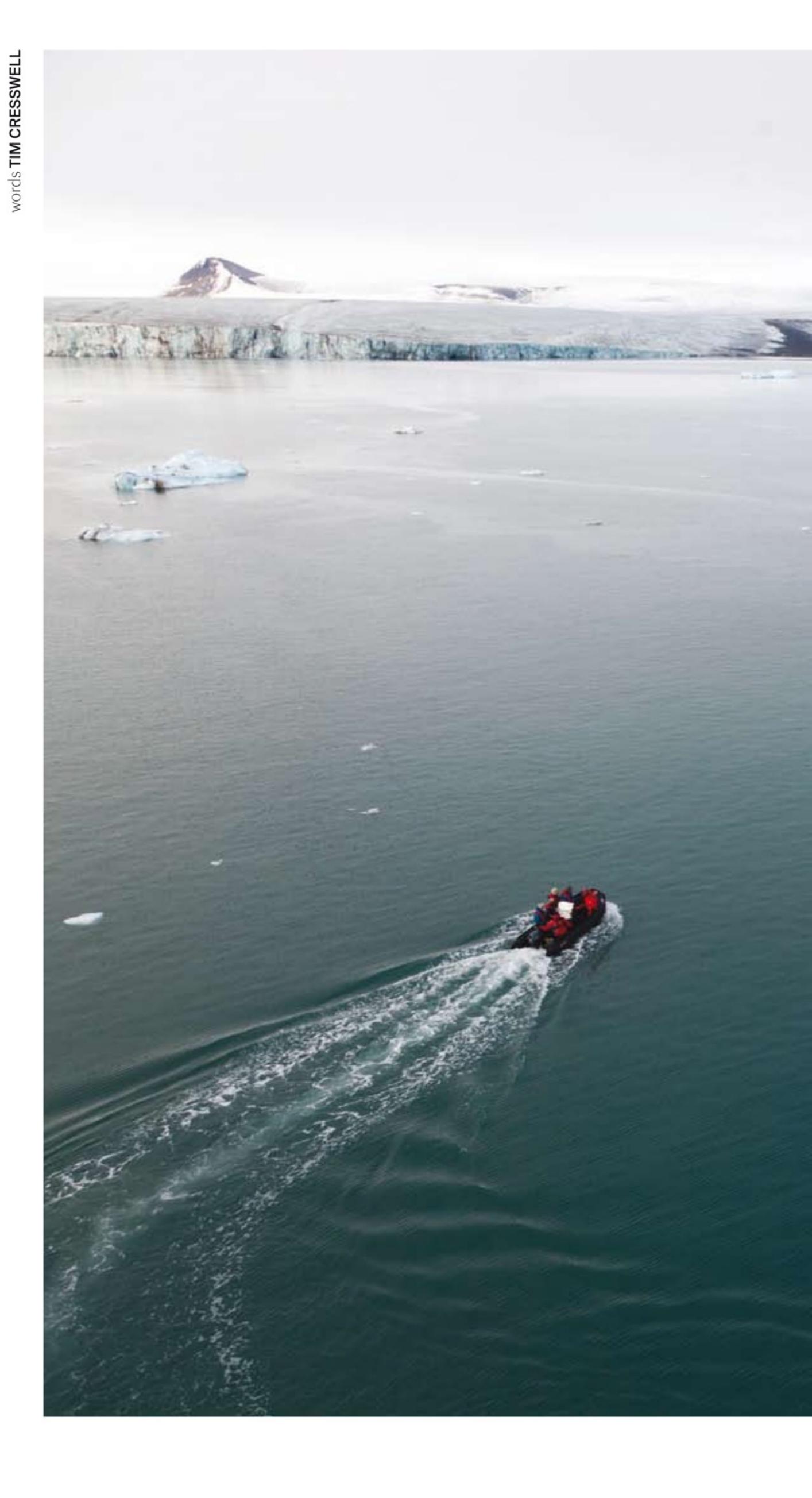
When hope did pervade this picture, we called it modernity, and its arrow of time, its temporality, was two-dimensional – past and future—which is why its dominant aesthetic genres were either historicist or futurist. Over the past 40 years, however, we have come to recognise that that name and that temporality no longer hold. History became one more territory to colonise; the future, as social and technological progress, was cashiered for mere novelty. Various candidate replacements have been offered up – postmodernity, posthistory, contemporaneity – and genre itself as a category is suspect. Yet none of this is quite satisfactory either.

So let me venture this: Sustainability.

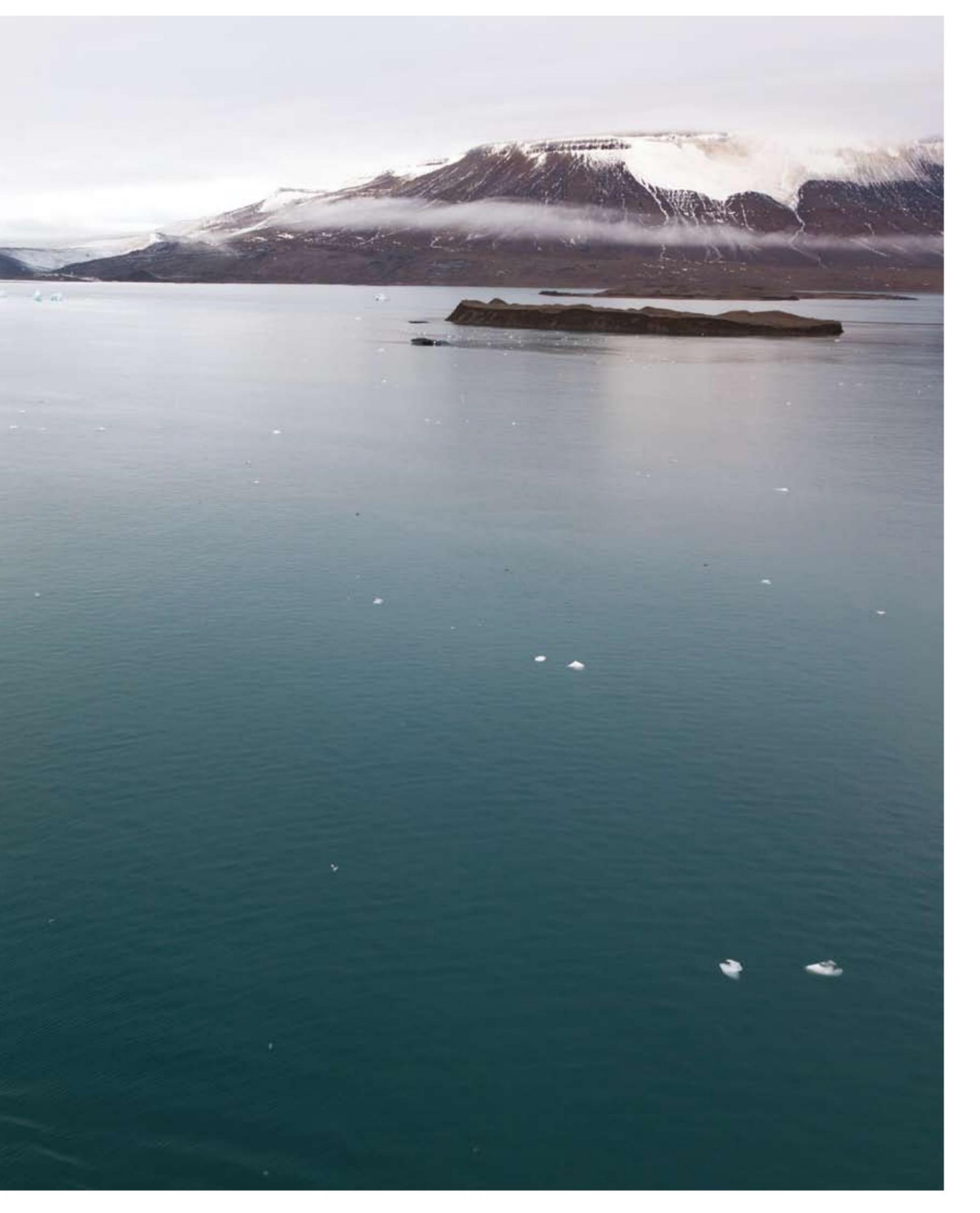
Sustainability not as a goal or an ethics, nor as qualifier of what already exists (eg, sustainable design, sustainable agriculture, sustainable economics), but sustainability as a time (our own), a periodisation, and as a form of temporality that whiteonwhite tries to model for us. For this is not a film that simply looks backwards in order to move forward - that would be a modernist move - nor is it one that simply exchanges the deep time of modernity for the more horizontally distributed and synchronic field theories of postmodernity or contemporaneity or posthistory. Rather, in its embrace of technology to 'tune' multiple overlapping, independent temporalities - the personal (Holz's), the social (City-A's), the economic (New Method's), the geological (earth's), the machinic (the algorithm's), the systemic (capitalism's), the physical (space-time itself), to name just a handful - with the only one that we can actually access ourselves (without it having to be represented for us), which is just the experience of watching the film as it unfolds some horizon of meaningfulness, a connection or communication that we can never be sure of, like some alien handshake, whiteonwhite puts us in contact with a temporality for which we are largely responsible, but also a temporality that we have nevertheless been given, like a gift, to inhabit. Whiteonwhite models for us sustainable time, even as it wraps itself in a vision of a world that has run out of it.:

whiteonwhite:algorithmicnoir is being screened in the New Frontiers section of the Sundance Film Festival, Park City, on 22, 24 and 25 January, and at SFMOMA, San Francisco, in March

left: whiteonwhite: algorithmicnoir, 2011



88 Feature



You carried a local delicacy each time in your bag, some small chosen gift, a stone, an apple, flowers, a photograph, transported hundreds of miles, as if you could bring a bit of your earth to me with each meeting; as if, over the months, you would bring your place to mine, one handful at a time.

Ann Michaels and John Berger, Railtracks (2011)

n July an island nation will arrive in Weymouth Harbour. It will be a moment of magic when a bit of faraway otherness arrives on Britain's coast – bringing something of another place with it.

In magic there are two now-neglected principles of space. One is the principle of contiguity. This is the idea that things that are close to each other can affect each other. Intangible properties of things flow between them due to their spatial proximity. When one part is removed and carried away, these properties may remain with it. These travelling parts can carry their origins with them as they journey, and the part can come to stand for the whole. By being somewhere in particular, or next to something, an object attains powers that stay with it as it moves. Something of the place of origin moves, is dislocated, but links an arrival to a departure. Something like this belief is apparent in the mundane way we use souvenirs. We bring that place with us and it appears to us in our living room or kitchen as part of everyday life. Postcards on the fridge, the tea towel with the map of Crete, a plastic model of the Eiffel Tower. All of these are little bits of elsewhere.

The second spatial principle is the principle of mimetic sympathy. This is the idea that a similar arrangement of space or appearance can act over a distance to affect the space it mimics. Like influences like. This similarity is not the notion of a perfectly accurate copy. Influence is based on being 'like', not 'the same as'. Both of these principles are present in a voodoo doll. The doll looks like the person it can affect from a distance. It also often includes bits of that person – a hair, perhaps. Contiguity and mimesis are combined.

Both of these principles are present in Alex Hartley's project *Nowhereisland*. The work involves returning to the small island of Nyskjaeret (which is part of the Svalbard archipelago in the High Arctic). In 2004, as part the Cape Farewell project in which artists engaged with issues of climate change, Hartley searched for and discovered the island. It had been recently revealed by the melting ice of a retreating glacier. He was the first human ever to stand on it. The Norwegian Polar Institute recognised Nyskjaeret and included the island on all maps subsequent to its discovery. This process was at the centre of Hartley's artwork *Nymark* (*Undiscovered Island*)

(2006), which formed part of Cape Farewell's 2007 Art & Climate Change exhibition.

Last autumn, an expedition team from different walks of life (and including myself) arrived at Nyskjaeret on the sailing ship Noorderlicht and collected as much of the island material as the ship could hold. The original island is roughly the size of a football pitch and is mainly formed of loose moraine material anchored to the seabed by a few pieces of bedrock. Natural erosion over the seven years since its discovery has already reduced its volume by a third, and in 20 or so more years the island will all but have ceased to exist. The island material was sailed into international waters, where on 20 September 2011 it was declared a new nation. It is currently being transported to Britain, where the magical transformation from material back into island will take place to produce a smaller version of Nyskjaeret called Nowhereisland: a large-scale floating sculpture measuring 40m by 8m. The island material is currently being held in customs somewhere in the nonplace world between 'there' and 'here', where officials are assessing its 'value'. Is it just 'stuff' or is it 'art' and at what point on a voyage does 'stuff' become 'art'? At what point is value added, and what is this value?

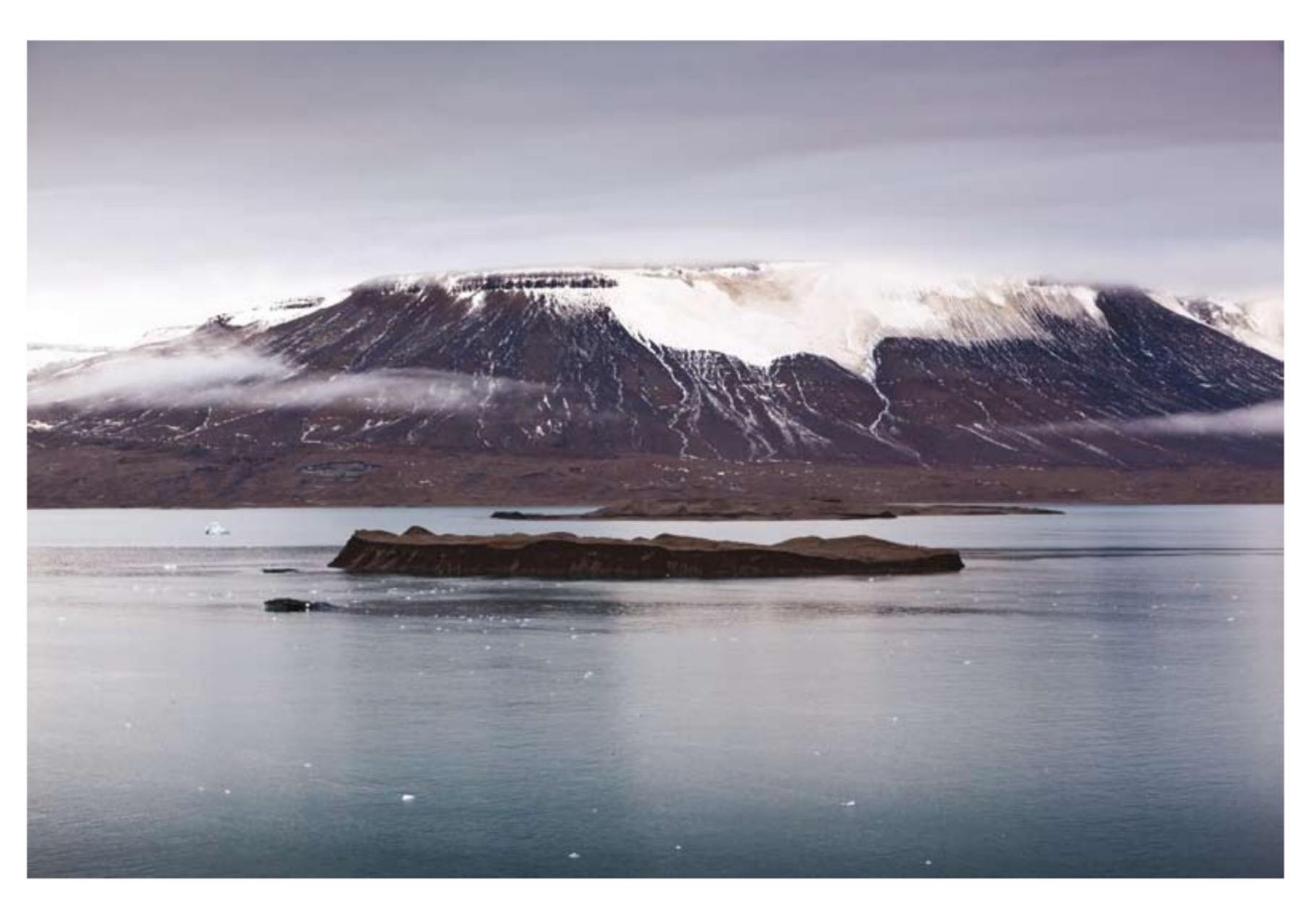
The Nowhereisland project is not the first story of moving land in Svalbard. The story of Svalbard is already a story of moving rock. The islands that make up Svalbard, which are now a little over 1000km south of the North Pole, were



this page, from top: detritus from S.A. Andrée's fatal 1897 balloon attempt on the North Pole, Virgohamna; Camp Mansfield, Blomstrand; cairn with claim note left by Alex Hartley in 2004, Nyskjaeret

facing page, from top: Nyskjaeret; Alex Hartley rebuilding cairn on Nyskjaeret

preceeding pages: The Nowhereisland expedition approaches Nyskjaeret, discovered by Alex Hartley in the Svalbard archipelago in 2004









once (about 800 million years ago) very close to the South Pole. On their journeys they crossed the equator (about 400 million years ago). If you visit Svalbard and are inclined to look, you can see red rocks that appear as though they belong in Arizona or Alice Springs. This is red Devonian sandstone and was formed when Svalbard was where Morocco is now. Svalbard has long been on a journey.

Thanks to the more recent travels of us humans, rocks have come and gone from this place on the edge of the world over the last 400 or so years. They have been used in the ballast of ships since the sixteenth century, when English whalers began to operate in the area. They were taken aboard to trim and balance a vessel, and jettisoned to be replaced by more valuable cargo. The major industry of Svalbard through the twentieth century was coal mining. Approaching Longyearbyen (the archipelago's administrative centre) by ship, you can see the black surface of mined slopes topped by mysterious cable-car towers used to move coal from the land to the sea. From there it was shipped to fire the industries of Norway and the Soviet Union.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Ernest Mansfield, an eccentric English capitalist and head of the Northern Exploration Company, quarried marble at Ny-London (New London), believing that it would become the biggest and richest source in the world. He wanted to use the magic of capitalism to add value to these bits of the island by moving them south and selling them to people for mantelpieces and monuments. The marble had other ideas. Cracked and shattered by freeze and thaw, it fell apart on its voyage to England and had to be jettisoned into the sea.

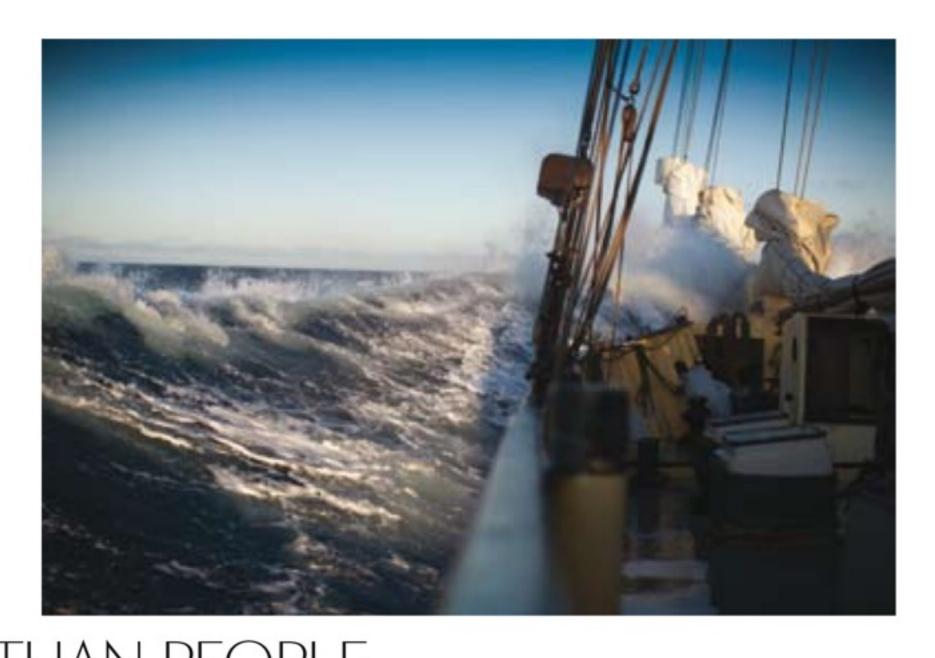
The traffic in rocks has not all been one way. Dotted around present-day Svalbard are bits and pieces of yellow and red bricks left by explorers and adventurers from the Netherlands, England and Sweden. At Virgohamna, the site of S.A. Andrée's 1896-7 attempts to reach the North Pole by hydrogen balloon, the landscape is littered with bits of broken Royal Doulton pots (left by the later American balloonist Walter Wellman) and the yellow bricks imported to build cabins and kilns. Over a century later, they appear to be folding back into the land.



this page, from top: rough seas; Noorderlicht returns from international waters – the new nation of Nowhereisland is declared on 20 September 2011

facing page, from top: Noorderlicht sets sail into international waters; Alex Hartley takes a final look after collecting material from Nyskjaeret

all photos: Max McClure (www.maxmcclure.com)



place to call home, Nowhereisland is an island IN SEARCH

In the natural world, a rock out of place is referred to as an 'erratic' - it is usually possible to trace its origins and account for its travels in the ice of a glacier. The word 'erratic' comes from the Latin errare. It is an error. It also means 'wanderer' - a nomad with no fixed course. In everyday English, 'erratic' refers to the chaotic and disorganised. The Svalbard rocks (the marble, the coal, the bricks, the Royal Doulton pots, the rocks that will make up Nowhereisland) are also erratics, but moved by us - by humans

busy journeying and connecting the world. Wandering rocks. Rather than people moving in search of a

nation journeying south in search of its people Size of the new island nation in September, more than 4,000 people from 58 countries have become citizens, and this summer, towns around the coast of southwest England will decide how to meet and greet this roving nation. How will these rocks be welcomed? What magic will be enacted as they conduct their travels? Nowhereisland will look like Nyskjaeret and will consist of material from Nyskjaeret. It will be an act of artistic voodoo. The 'value' that has been added to these rocks will be revealed as they become a work of art encountered by residents and visitors in Weymouth or Mevagissey, or by people out walking their dogs on the coastal path. Nowhereisland will carry Nyskjaeret and its tales of changing earth along with it.:

Nowhereisland is an art project by Alex Hartley, one of 12 artists taking the lead projects funded by Arts Council England as part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad. The project is produced by Situations (www.situations.org.uk) at the University of the West of England, Bristol. Nowhereisland will begin its six-week journey around England's southwest coast on 25 July. To become a citizen and follow the weekly 'resident thinkers', visit www. nowhereisland.org.

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Reviews marathons – remember them? Recently ArtReview has been worrying that its reviewers don't. Concerned that their 'one show at a time' attitude was making them go soft, it dispatched four of the least healthy-looking to review 50 (ish) London shows in a day. It's for their benefit and your entertainment, so everyone should be happy. Except perhaps some of the artists whose shows they reviewed towards the end of the day when those reviewers' flab started to drag. Still, cruel to be kind, as ArtReview barked at its marathonians between mouthfuls of pork pies from the back of one of Boris's city bikes (pedalled by the executive editor), cattle prod at the ready in case the pace slackened...

Artwork: LAURA OLDFIELD FORD

EAST

MARTIN HERBERT

PRIORITY MOMENTS

Herald St

**DUNCAN CAMPBELL: ARBEIT** 

Hotel

OSCAR MURILLO: AREPAS Y TAMALES

Cole Contemporary

SCOTT LYALL: NUDES 3

Campoli Presti

**GERT & UWE TOBIAS** 

Maureen Paley **MAGALI REUS: ON** 

Approach

**RUTH BEALE, UNA KNOX:** 

OH, ZERO, ONE Cell Project Space

**BETTINA SAMSON:** MALLUMA MATERIO

Nettie Horn

JOAN JONAS: **VOLCANO SAGA** 

Wilkinson

I COULD BE SO

**GOOD FOR YOU** Transition Gallery

**CLUNIE REID: COS WHAT'S** 

INSIDE HIM NEVER DIES

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MAXINE BRISTOW, SALLY

**MORFILL:** Z-DEPTH BUFFER

Five Years

JEFFREY VALLANCE:

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**QUANTUM POLICE** 

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**EDUARDO PADILHA/DEEPA** 

CHUDASAMA

Agency

JOBBERS TO THE STARS

Café Gallery Projects POINT. LINE. PLANE.

Hannah Barry Gallery

**DOREEN MCPHERSON:** PORTRAITS

Studio Voltaire

ALEXANDRA BIRCKEN

Studio Voltaire

ALL I CAN SEE IS THE

MANAGEMENT

Gasworks

TOMMA ABTS Greengrassi

DOROTA JURCZAK: KLOAKE

Corvi-Mora

WEST

LAURA MCLEAN-FERRIS

JONATHAN LASKER: THE 80S

Timothy Taylor Gallery

**CHRISTIANA SOULOU:** 

LES ENFANTS TERRIBLES

Sadie Coles HQ

MERLIN CARPENTER:

TATE CAFE

Simon Lee Gallery

LOUISE LAWLER: NO DRONES

Sprüth Magers

CHAIN CHAIN CHAIN

Bischoff/Weiss

JEFF WALL

White Cube, Mason's Yard

THE MYSTERY OF

**APPEARANCE** 

Haunch of Venison **MICHAEL STUBBS:** 

FIREEYE MELTDOWN

Laurent Delaye

**MAURO PERUCCHETTI:** 

JELLY BABY FAMILY

Halcyon Gallery KATIE CUDDON

Simon Oldfield

**CATHERINE OPIE** 

Stephen Friedman ANN CRAVEN: SUMMER

Southard Reid

NORTH

MARK RAPPOLT

MARGARITA GLUZBERG:

**AVENUE DES GOBELINS** 

Paradise Row

**MEMORY: CONTEMPORARY** 

INTERNATIONAL SCULPTURE

Rosenfeld Porcini

GOD & CO:

FRANÇOIS DALLEGRET **BEYOND THE BUBBLE** 

Architectural Association School

of Architecture PAUL NOBLE:

**WELCOME TO NOBSON** 

Gagosian, Britannia Street

**GRAYSON PERRY:** THE TOMB OF THE

UNKNOWN CRAFTSMAN

British Museum

CHARLES AVERY:

PLACE DE LA REVOLUTION

Pilar Corrias

SERGEY BRATKOV: SCREAM

Regina Gallery PAUL LEE:

**MOON RIVER** 

Modern Art

KIMBER SMITH

Modern Art

OMA/PROGRESS

Barbican Art Gallery

RYAN MCGINLEY: **WANDERING COMMA** 

Alison Jacques Gallery

**GRANDMATERIA II** 

Gallery Libby Sellers

94 Feature

# #RONDON

words: MARTIN HERBERT

Let me get my defence in first. Take up the challenge of the Reviews Marathon for the fourth year in a row, get told *again* that use of any pharmacological dissociative is prohibited, and you start looking with unseemly keenness for ways to make it interesting-slash-bearable. Because God knows you can't depend on the art itself to do that, especially if your itinerary includes Vyner Street. On the other hand, take

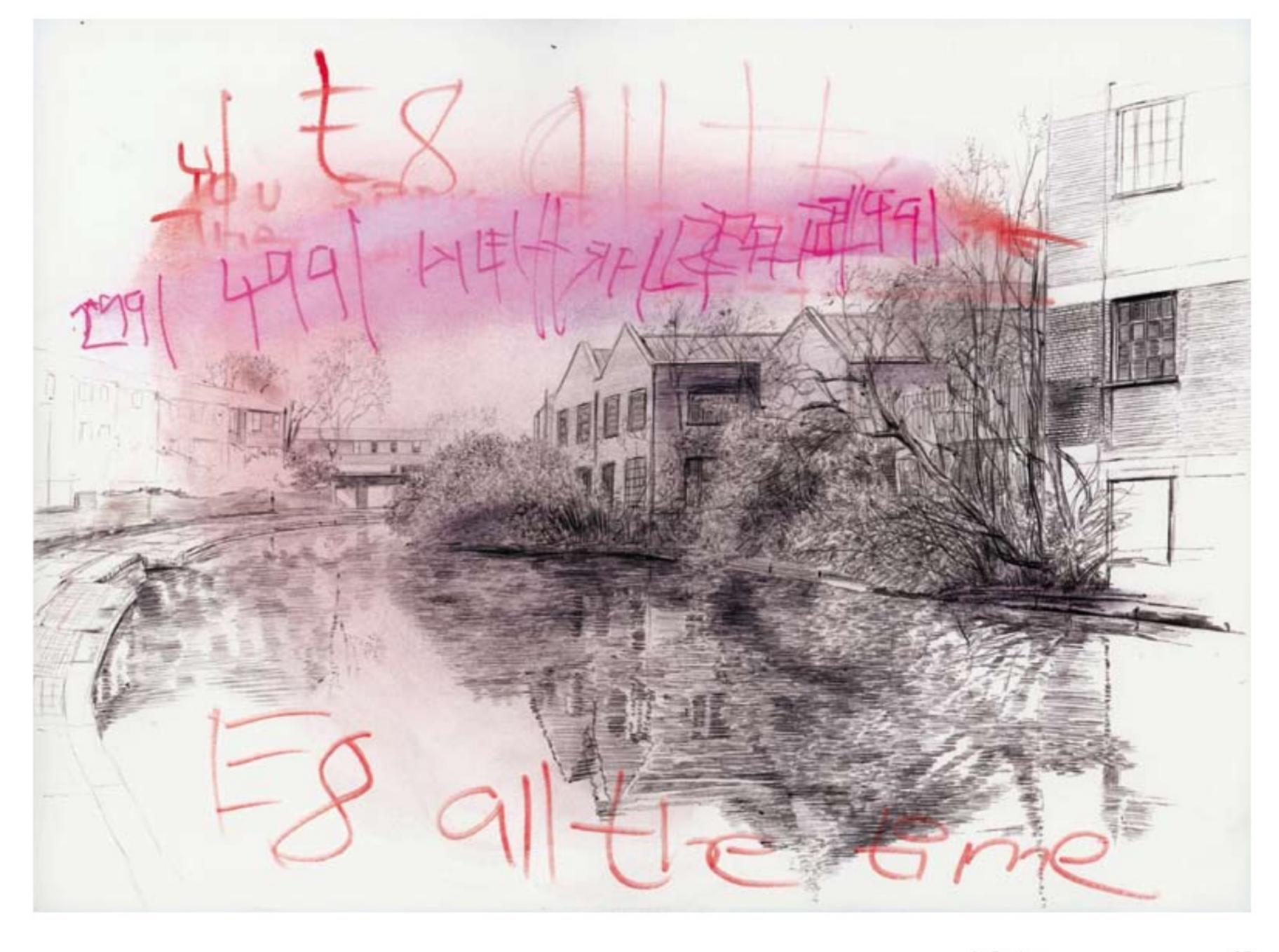
it up in a year when the editor – who clearly regrets not going into politics like Papa wanted – has gleefully crunched the word count and number of galleries, and you also find yourself gifted with opportunities. So, pondering the advantages of a shorter trip, I'm thinking shorter attention span; I'm thinking shorter legs. I'm thinking, too, of Wim Wenders's lovely *Alice in the Cities* (1974), in which a journalist with a pressing deadline and a nine-year-old girl go on a road trip, and all ends fairly happily for everyone.

But life isn't always like the movies. Timelapse, if you will: it's late on a cold Saturday afternoon, and a nine-year-old girl in a leather jacket is staring dolefully at a roomful of what look like deconstructed bathroom fittings. "Seriously, Dad," she says, chewing gum, "are you as clueless about this as I am?" Then she raises an eyebrow and points, silently, at the exit...

# PRIORITY MOMENTS Herald St

It's earlier, we've just alighted at Bethnal Green tube station, the child is exulting loudly over the sight of a bright purple wheelie bin in the street and we're ready for contemporary art. And

Priority Moments will make things easy for us. There's no explanation anywhere of what connects this group show's contents, but 'Priority Moments' are the deals (spend £40 in Burton, get £10 off) that one particular oxygen-themed mobile-phone network dangles before its customers. Priority Moments, meanwhile, seems to have something to do with temporality and dislocation. Its own offers include: eavesdrop on the office 'for hours at a time', via Amalia Pica's glass tumbler superglued to the dividing wall; rewind to the outset of Donald Judd's career using Simon Martin's metal pipe sunk into a bright red block; and generally lose your moorings in Oliver Laric's video Versions (2011), which my unpredictable companion declares, between slurps of Powerade, to be "an abyssal evocation of restless imagistic flux". Hmm. The narration, recounted from some misty future point, recalls how the world's statues were 'spat, pissed and shat on' (oops), and an effigy of the Virgin was turned into a personification of justice by removing the Christ child and adding weighing scales. As her body morphs onscreen like glossy black liquid, it's now clear to both of us what Laric's exhibition-opening inkjet print Maria Justitia (2011) is all about. Still, only one of us christens it "Goo Queen" and declares it to be "awesome".



### DUNCAN CAMPBELL: ARBEIT

Hotel

Flitting next door, we settle in excitedly to watch Duncan Campbell's 39-minute paradocumentary about a German chancellor - for about 52 seconds, before I snap back to reality and beg the gallerist to give me a screener DVD to watch later. Marathons are too short for films; plus, the Schoenberg blasting from my daughter's earbuds is almost as distracting as the sound of her chewing; and in any case, a curator I'd seen earlier in the week told me that he'd been sent a screener and loved it - and frankly, who the hell watches films in galleries anyway? Thankfully the gallerist relents immediately, though when I watch it later at home I'm a bit perplexed. Generally I think Campbell's films - which tend to scramble filmic archives and self-shot, poetic footage in the doomed pursuit of knowledge about places and times distant from home - are the cat's meow; but this one, a second-person narrative about Hans Tietmeyer and the formation of the EU, is languid and dense and, cliché alert, a lot easier to admire than it is to adore. (It's also hugely assured, though, and I'm going to watch it again.) Back in Hotel, meanwhile, the gallerist mentions that he was just about to leave for a performance by some Brazilian dancers in nearby Whitechapel - it being Saturday lunchtime and all - and would we like to go?

### OSCAR MURILLO: AREPAS Y TAMALES

**Cole Contemporary** 

Hell to the yes, and not least because I've guessed - or think I've guessed - what this is. Not long ago I taught Murillo in a London art school (he's still a postgrad student). He was exhibiting a smashedup studio floor tricked out with understated video projections, and his fellow students were reminiscing happily about the 'hot' South American girls he got to dance on it at the opening of the interim show. On arrival here, though, there's a bunch of tables with fluffy tablecloths and food on them and a handful of girls not dancing at all but, rather, doing some discontinuous yogacising - accelerated kundalinistyle breathing, contortions that make it look like their heads have disappeared into the floor-while, on an audio recording, a yoga instructor calls out moves that they effectively ignore. It's an interesting tributary of relational art: what'll be left are the tables, with the performance as a kind of contagious rumour. "Peripheralism plus scenography" is what I think I hear my pint-size companion say through a mouthful of éclair, while

she tips a plateful of coconut snowballs into a rucksack emblazoned with a picture of Bruno Mars. Personally I'm glad that Murillo has more than one idea, or more than one way of approaching one idea. But then as we're leaving someone says, "Wait, there's going to be bingo!" and that suddenly seems like too many ideas already. (A week later, I discover that Murillo is now working with Hotel; mystery solved.)

# SCOTT LYALL: NUDES 3 Campoli Presti

Doubling back, we pop in here - Sutton Lane's new home under a new name, in what used to be Wolfgang Tillmans's studio-and I immediately start to wonder, once again and not for the last time, whether I've made a mistake with my choice of workmate. This show is called *nudes* 3 and there's a photograph of some bare flesh (admittedly just legs) at the entrance. How wrong can you be, though, because Lyall's work turns out to be U-rated and coolly luscious: the Canadian makes the palest of abstractions using a UV printer, spraying and erasing (hence the strikethrough) dispersive layers of pale pastel ink on canvas, though the press release immediately gets technical enough that I don't really know how this happens: it speaks of 'tanning' the image and of an index of rays 'beyond colour'. Search us. "Cool", says my cohort tentatively, dipping a finger in her bag and bringing it out covered in chocolate and cream, having declared that she's not going to be doing anymore "stupid artspeak". The word that comes to mind for me in front of these paintings, meanwhile, is 'want' - and I don't even really mind which one, though actually I'd like at least three so that I can feel the spectral subtleties of tone bodying forth in contrast and, oh, I'll take the photo of the legs too so I can do the tonal cross-referencing it seems to encourage. All of which probably does Lyall's austere, medium-querying procedure a disservice, but if the optical enjoyment is what gets someone to think about them in the first place, today we at least do the looking.

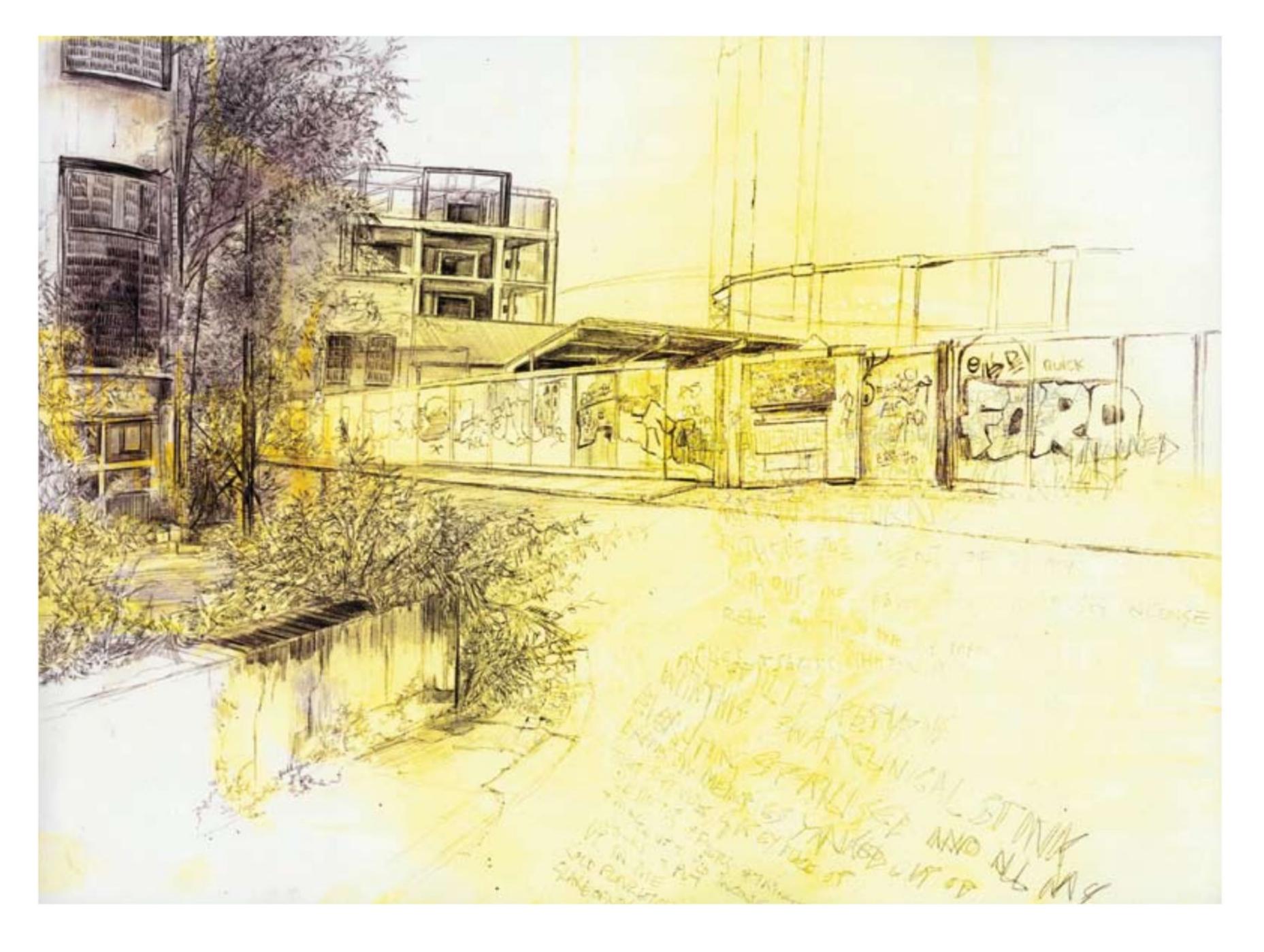
### **GERT & UWE TOBIAS**

**Maureen Paley** 

Minimalism to maximalism. Upon walls painted midnight-blue, the Cologne-based brothers have strung a seemingly endless array of big woodblock prints and paper collages pasted on gloopy gouache, all suffused with creepy folkloric signifiers-which mostly means 'anthropomorphic animals doing undefined things to each other' and dotted the floors with glazed ceramics in a similar vein. The ghost of Max Ernst hangs around, pointing at all the collaged bird-headed things, coughing and wanting royalties (or at least a credit in the press release). It all feels a bit content-light, and I wonder idly which bits draw on 'personal biography', as the aforesaid handout mentions; maybe those that recall the portions of the Tobiases' lives spent looking through mouldering old almanacs and art books. "It's good for a bit and then it's all the same", says a small voice beside me, and it's hard to disagree.

### MAGALI REUS: ON Approach

Metal poles with metal casts of point-and-shoot cameras on them, grey Jesmonite casts of the Xray trays used at airports, wall-mounted aluminium rectangles with coinlike metal discs jammed into slots cut in them. Reus, who 'lives and works between Amsterdam and London' better look on a map to see where that is: France? -conjures with specificities, but this whole swishyet-scattery install (complete, on our visit, with a nonfunctioning film) feels pretty abstract, an evocation of a state of potential, perhaps. Minimalism and consumption get interlaid, summarising the avant-garde's descent into style -though Reus's intellectual programme feels more individualistic and delicate than that. At this point, she goes on my 'definitely interesting but I don't really know what this is; try and find time to find out' list, which at any point fills a couple of Moleskine notepads. "This room looks like a tornado hit it" is the fifth-grader's squeaky assessment. Pressed further, she says that that means it's good - and I've seen her bedroom, so I believe her - before we go downstairs and encounter the gallery owner and she tells him the show is, yes, "awesome". It's clear that he's never heard anyone say that about any of his shows: soon after, clutching Free-Lunches-at-the-Approach-Forever vouchers, we depart.



# RUTH BEALE, UNA KNOX: OH, ZERO, ONE

Cell Project Space

What ties this doubleheader together is a shared interest in retrieval mechanisms and memory hence the title, which, we're told, 'could be the bytes and digits of a computer's smallest addressable memory unit'. Knox approaches recall in two very different ways, first by making prints (on silk) of pre-seventeeth-century scholar's bookplates sourced from the British Library, secondly in her video 4.5 ft. and to the left, behind me (2011), in which a man wanders around a giant archive of some sort, stares melancholically at a clock mechanism or lengthily descends a circular staircase. (Apparently this is hilarious, if you're nine years old.) The building, for Knox, is analogous to a brain, a mental storehouse: the man supposedly suffers from temporal lobe epilepsy, which leaves him open to seizures and mental delusions, which he acts out. There are computer servers in the building, and all of this (the video, the bookplates) has something to do with a movement from 'real' archives and artefacts to digitised ones. Ironically, meanwhile, Ruth Beale's work ends up inadvertently making a case for nonphysical archives. Along with her

wallwork listing all of London's public libraries, she's installed a minilibrary of utopian literature – some of which, the gallery director tells us, has been stolen.

# BETTINA SAMSON: MALLUMA MATERIO

**Nettie Horn** 

As we descend into Vyner Street, utopianism feels contagious, because here's Bettina Samson nodding back to Josef Albers's 1920s Bauhaus glass pictures. Samson's sleek black-and-white geometric reliefs – made from fired, moulded glass evenly finessed with matt spraypaint – variously draw on the geometry of Mayan architecture that Albers was interested in and graphic simulations made by a spectroscope that Samson used in an astronomy laboratory in Marseilles, a device intended to detect dark matter. Past and futurity fold together, since

there's a pointed confluence of design in the paired images: For a future observation of the dark matter II and Last trip to Chichén Itzá and Uxmal II (both 2011), for example, both angle their patterned geometries on the diagonal, and it feels like one could be mapped onto the other. To me there's something vaguely disheartening and David Icke/2012-ish about dragging the Mayans into the future in this way, but that doesn't spoil my companion's enjoyment. "It's so modern", she coos approvingly; which is, I think, as pithy a three-word summary of Samson's footnote-laden, decoding-requiring practice as you're going to get.

### JOAN JONAS: VOLCANO SAGA

Wilkinson

Joan Jonas is a bit of a baffler for me: instinctively I always think she's great, and yet at the same time I've never known exactly what her work is about. I've seen her onstage in Reykjavík waving sticks about and screeching and left feeling none the wiser, and now I've seen *Volcano Saga* (1985/1994), which brings together props, drawings and video footage from two

performances, and am given to understand that it's to do with 'the development of female character'. So here's Tilda Swinton, on video, playing a woman who recounts four dreams to a seer - who interprets them - and there's a lot of steamy, explosive Icelandic landscape bluescreened onto it, so that the whole thing (Swinton plus primitive video technology) looks thoroughly Derek Jarman-esque. The main problem here is that perennial one with video installations in big spaces like Wilkinson's - the sound is fucking awful, boomy as hell, so it's really hard to make out what's being said, and after a while I stop trying and start thinking about how anticipatory Jonas's video-plus-props aesthetic clearly was. But please, people: get a consulting acoustician onboard when you do this kind of thing. Just saying.

### I COULD BE SO GOOD FOR YOU

**Transition Gallery** 

Regent Studios, with its lovingly maintained crackhouse vibe, isn't the sort of place I'd recommend to an adult - okay, I know it's fine, it just doesn't feel it - never mind a kid. But the kid makes hay with it, not least by running down the flights of stairs very fast and explaining, when I catch up with her, that she's pretending to be the man in the Una Knox video. But that all happens after I Could Be So Good for You, a 'show without theme', except that it's got the Minder theme tune for a title and looks back to the 1980s in general. So here, among other punkily energetic things, is Dominic From Luton doing a kind of downmarket Cindy Sherman-cum-Meryl Streep by dressing as Margaret Thatcher in a triptych of photographs (in a wheelchair, or sitting on the toilet), and Bermingham & Robinson presenting fake beards made out of 'dust and hair from the underneath of a series of Anish Kapoor sculptures'. It's all very street-level, which makes things easier for one of us – namely, the one who notices that Dominic's taxidermy rat in a miniature sleeping bag is, in fact, breathing. But she can't tell me what this detail adds, so I inform her that she'll be going to bed early without supper.

### CLUNIE REID: COS WHAT'S INSIDE HIM

**MOT International** 

**NEVER DIES** 

Clunie Reid's silver-backed rephotographed collage aesthetic, with scuzzy tabloid imagery overlaid by angry felt-tipped commentary, arrived so fully realised a few years back that it was hard to see how it would evolve. Here it feels like it has, thanks to the fact that she's printing on holographic paper with a metallic, pebbled pattern. In the images, body parts predominate, flipped and turned negative or smeared with digital postproduction, while the texts are resonant banalities or obscurities: 'I like ducks... can ducks use the Internet?' Indeed, the Internet and the superficies of information flow underscore Reid's work, but at the same time it's pretty formal: the components feel interchangeable. My daughter, having recently broken through to the playground big leagues by watching Twilight (Bad Parenting 101, not that this is much better), favours the one with the vampire teeth in it.

### MAXINE BRISTOW, SALLY MORFILL: Z-DEPTH BUFFER

**Five Years** 

The press release uses the phrases 'blurring boundaries' and 'interrogates through her practice', as though that were actually permissible. Thin ice. Maxine Bristow, on the evidence of her work, stands in the centre of B&Q and sees the whole place swirl into a complexly articulated sculptural aggregate; Sally Morfill, meanwhile, is apparently recording the gestures that accompany speech, mapping them as lines of movement, and translating these into lines made by cutting into vinyl, which manifest on the wall. What's going on in both cases is a kind of humanising strike against mass production. My compatriot looks pensive. "This gallery is smaller than my bedroom", she finally offers, which means it's very small. Then the aforementioned "are you as clueless..." comment gets made, and the door gets pointedly pointed to.

### JEFFREY VALLANCE: RELIQUARIES

Xero, Kline & Coma

But we carry on, and I'm actually excited about this one. American Jeffrey Vallance - a sort of avuncular artist-cum-cultural anthropologist who spends his time ritually burying frozen supermarket chickens and paying visits to the King of Tonga and collecting a few related artefacts and calling them sculpture - doesn't show in this country nearly enough. In this bijou place on Hackney Road, a bunch of his reliquaries (and accompanying explicatory texts) are arranged together. One features a tiny model of Nixon lying in state, memorialising the day when Vallance wanted to see Nixon's newly dead body but didn't get to; another inters a bone from Blinky the Friendly Hen interred in a tin model of a two-headed chicken. I get the impression that this show has probably been pretty well attended by a cult audience of about 11 people, but maybe I'm congratulating myself. And I am congratulating myself, because I get to snap up a copy of Vallance's totally out of print Nixonobsessed booklet My Life with Dick for £1.50. Score.

### PAWEL SLIWINSKI: FAMILY

Supplement

Last stop, Poland. Sliwiński, who was born on the Polish-Ukrainian border and makes fluent but aggressively disgruntled painting that looks like it could have come out of Cologne circa 1982 (with more than a touch of George Grosz, too), and engages with 'contemporary Polish themes of aggression, drunkenness, hooliganism and football', manages to quickly encapsulate why my whole conceptual premise for this marathon was flawed. But it doesn't matter, because the exhausted young aesthete is lying down in the gallery, failing to care less about this art thing anymore. I meander around awhile, watching birds get skewered on sticks above fires and muscular bodies melt into painterly roils, and decide I like Sliwiński quite a bit. The child, with a last burst of energy, says something about definitely getting an iPhone 4 for Christmas now and props herself up and looks ahead of her - at, unfortunately, the least child-appropriate painting in the place. "That's nice," she says, gesturing. As I feel regret once more and wonder where she gets her sarcastic streak (while feeling pretty glad that my mission of putting her off a career in art criticism seems to be working: law school, here we come), we go, and -I swear, despite the various lies above - pass a drunk on a bicycle singing Ultravox's Vienna really badly. This means nothing to us, frankly. But we're used to that by now.



words: J.J. CHARLESWORTH

# BRIAN MORAN: ENGINEERING CONSENT 5: THE SOAP CARVING CONTEST

Kynastonmcshine

Brian Moran's show has just shut, but Kynastonmcshine's hyperenthusiastic Matthew Poole lets me in, briskly explaining the conceptual backstory for these display cases full of white soap bars carved into various ornamental, decorative and figurative shapes. Apparently, Moran's carvings restage the soap-carving competitions initiated by Procter & Gamble in America during the 1920s, as publicity stunts for their Ivory soap brand, under the direction of public relations pioneer Edward Bernays (who happened to be a nephew of Freud). So what we've got is a pungent blend of capitalism, marketing and psychoanalysis, which might point to how corporate power seeks to channel and manipulate individual creativity into marketing outcomes, anticipating the current trend for viral, associative marketing techniques in which enthusiastic early-adopters are brought into creative, active engagement with brands, rather than being passively advertised to through the usual mass-media channels.

Given that Moran has gone to the trouble of rehearsing this pop-contest carving spectacle, one has to acknowledge the currency of its critique – you can't open an art-theory journal without talk of 'post-Fordist' relations of production or 'cognitive capital' – yet the range of carvings on display aren't super-interesting, or if they are, only according to the usual criteria of folkloric-craft competence and virtuosity: three chainlinks carved from a single block, a leaping dolphin, a cluster of flowers. Moran isn't trying to exceed or transcend the limits of popular creativity; instead he's making a critical gesture by pointing out its subordination by capital. But much popular creativity has always existed comfortably within

the norms of mainstream culture; and the vogue for criticising capitalism's 'turn to creativity' seems a bit redundant now that capitalism is experiencing something of a 'crisis of productivity', not creativity. So Moran's show starts me thinking about in what ways creativity could be understood as 'productive', and what stops capitalism from being 'creative', and whether his show is, in fact, that 'productive'. And with all that swirling around my noggin, I say 'be seeing you' to Matthew and stagger out to see what's going on at Cartel...

### **QUANTUM POLICE**

Cartel

Kynastonmcshine and Cartel are located in the Old Police Station, an actual decommissioned Metropolitan Police station that is now run as a 'DIY Art Centre'. Cartel is located in a shipping container in the yard. There's a weirdly amusing show curated by Per Hüttner and Anne Klontz, of various documents, forensic evidence and objects relating to something called the Quantum Police - a shady organisation which appears to have made covert interventions in historical events, resulting in crimes going unsolved, particular individuals rising to power and so on. It's a sort of parody (I hope) of the kind of materials produced by conspiracy theorists, making impossibly obscure connections between facts that supposedly prove that everything that happens is being directed by unseen networks and organisations. But while it may be a good pastiche, it touches subtly on how conspiracytheory thinking has bled into daily consciousness, while pointing to how scientific thinking about indeterminacy (quantum physics) has become a philosophical metaphor for relativism. As one Quantum Police acolyte puts it in an 'interview' text, if everyone has a different understanding of events, how can one say if the events ever happened? Smart without being unfunny...

### EDUARDO PADILHA/ DEEPA CHUDASAMA

Agency

Padilha and Chudasama both have a big commitment to the sensuality of the materials they use. Padilha's work ranges widely, from wooden stretchers gloss-painted in lush colours onto which dozens of large coloured sequins have been delicately pinned, to sculptures assembled from found furnishings and parts of modernist furniture, to two series of wall-pinned photographic arrangements. One of these last superimposes old monochrome portraits of young Brazilian football players in formulaic team poses with squares of coloured acetate, while the other is of pictures of pink roses taken with a flash in an otherwise dark garden. Abstract colour, material and image play off each other while drawing attention to both their difference and

their mutual dependence. There's a warmth and generosity to these very tactile constructions, while the sculptures are more playfully aggressive.

Chudasama's sculptures upstairs have a more restrained sensibility, most of them constructed from masses of plastic zip-ties, the slender strips used to fix things to other things. Here they only loop onto each other, to form chainlink structures: a curtain of white loops hangs from a heading of pink loops; a square mount stretched over with black nylon mesh, the mesh weaved in with a shaggy density of black loops. On the floor, a large slightly depressed ball of white cable ties sits quietly and translucently: glimpses of its inner core reveal flecks of brightly coloured tags – red, blue – indistinct, intangible.

### JOBBERS TO THE STARS

Café Gallery Project

Getting lost in the frosty, postwar municipal scenery of Southwark Park - a grassy landscape of bare trees, ornamental ponds, hibernating birdlife, disused sports grounds and confused tramps - I finally find Café Gallery Projects, a sort of low-rent, south London version of the Serpentine Gallery, which has been beautifully refurbished into a gleaming white cube. Jobbers to the Stars is a curated show that 'seeks to challenge the conventions of hierarchy and power systems', its title referring to theatrical wrestlers whose assigned role is to always lose to the star wrestlers. Fair enough, but the show doesn't quite pack enough of a punch - or put you in a headlock, or slam you against the ropes, or... Most interesting are the videos by Katarina Zdjelar: one stages an interrogation of a (Bosnian?) asylum seeker by a Dutch official and his younger interpreter; the other the refugee's subsequent account of his life as a film extra in the West. It works by making one doubt whether these are actors or real people, especially the refugee, who could be both - who is 'in charge' of the narrative becomes unclear. Dora García's Yes or No (The Sphinx) (2004-5) demands the viewer's mouse-click answer to varyingly existential questions, but as there's only one 'correct' route through the sequence - which is the point of the piece - it ends up as irritating multimedia fiddling. Ruth Beale's charming and funny printed 'stage script' for a dialogue between three examples of Italian fascist architecture (worn as hat-models by the cast in accompanying photographs) allows for a pithy discourse on power, history and heritage. The moral of the show: if you're going to critique the modalities of power and hierarchy, it pays to be entertaining.



POINT. LINE. PLANE. Hannah Barry Gallery

Hannah Barry's perfectly professional whitecube-style space is all the more unnerving for being located in one of a number of rundown, brick and steel-roofed warehouse buildings in a decrepit trading estate behind Peckham Lane. Walking past Ghanaian shipping agencies, lockups stacked high with palettes of cash-and-carry soft drinks and Nigerian evangelical churches, I find Barry's cool show of what seems to be a current fashion among young art-school graduates: nonobjective, materials-specific, systems-andgeometry paintings and sculptures. If you were born after 1984, apparently, you'll be unstoppably drawn to creating surfaces that are iterated through some kind of procedure or logic or use of chance event, or that foreground the physical properties of their medium, while keeping image, gesture and reference well out of the picture, as sculptures. Bircken makes sculptures from various it were. It's a specialist discourse that's apparently

happy with itself, but it all seems arid and desiccated to me. There's a tremendous smell of African food being cooked across the yard, and all this visual austerity (in contrast to the more relaxed, sumptuous work at the Agency) is making me hungry...

### DOREEN MCPHERSON/ **ALEXANDRA BIRCKEN**

Studio Voltaire

The urban rail service from Peckham to Clapham is royally screwed up now, what with a passenger under a train at Penge or whatever, so I lose valuable time getting to Studio Voltaire. After the limp youthfulness witnessed at Hannah Barry, I'm hoping for something with a bit of guts, balls, pizzazz, attitude and/or smarts, but instead I find Alexandra Bircken's gloomy handmaking-process materials, weaving, knotting, linking. It's a

practice that produces, for example, a terrible Eva-Hesse-meets-Andy-Goldsworthy birchwood frame woven-over with grey-pasted string nets (Birch Field, 2011) and a tall tubular structure made from woven magnetic tape. I thought the weaving of magnetic tape for artistic purposes had been outlawed in 1994, but I was misinformed. There's a big upright magnetic surface to which a sort of chainmail pattern of steel curves has been attached, and a large floor piece consisting of strips of mirror reflecting the gallery ceiling, with two square areas in the middle cut out, exposing the floor. Bircken's work is, according to the leaflet, informed by her background in fashion - which may explain the narrow formal focus of each piece, and her insistence on making a cohesive, compelling visual statement with each one. In fact, it makes the gallery look like an interior design showroom that doesn't sell tables or chairs. The pamphlet rather bizarrely quotes New York Times critic Roberta Smith's appraisal of Bircken's work as 'a rather belated challenge to Post-Minimalist sculptors', which seems like damning with faint praise, but could be some sort of ironic double-bluff on the part of whoever put together the copy.

Next to Bircken's sterile involutions, Doreen McPherson's work is more engaging: her distorted portraits of people, made in graphite and pencil, have an unnerving intensity and vague sense of menace, somewhere between Pop art caricature and cubist mask. McPherson may be a member of an art group for people with 'learning disabilities' - Intoart - but the connection is carefully hidden in the leaflet, preempting any lazy differentiation between the competences of 'proper' artists and those of 'amateur' or 'outsider' artists, or those with 'learning disabilities'. So all I care about as I leave is that I'm more interested in McPherson's weird portraits than Bircken's cool sculptures. And in retrospect, the interaction between the intention of the artist and the reception of the viewer is always more interesting when made up of unexpected crossed wires, rather than closed loops...

### ALL I CAN SEE IS THE MANAGEMENT

Gasworks

Gasworks has a slightly geekish fascination with the critical zeitgeist, and is good at heavily researched political, art-historical shows. All I Can See Is the Management is an interesting shot at 'how late capitalist approaches to working life play out at work, in education and at home'. So, what with Kynastonmcshine's post-Fordist soap bars and Café Gallery Projects's pokey power plays, I'm having a political-art-fest day of it. All I Can See is political-theory-curating-art at its best/worst, so if you're into the critique of latecapitalist management culture, this will be your bag; and if you're not, then you'll get the hang of what politicised artists fret about these days. Much of this perspective is informed by a Foucauldian interest in the regimentation of education and its function in producing compliant workers for the capitalist machine. Unsurprisingly, it's the work from the 1970s that really burns brightly here, for better or worse. Worse is Allan Sekula's photo-text series School Is a Factory (1978-80), which plods around making links between educational institutions, vocational training colleges and big business, through a series of documentary shots of people in training and educational situations, and anecdotes about working conditions and workplace attitudes. Haunting Sekula's work is the shocked recognition that the cultural upheaval of the previous decade, the 1960s and the counterculture, didn't result in a social revolution, and that by the late 70s, workers had returned to their compliant role in the economic system, only this time with handlebar moustaches and flared trousers. For lefty radicals at the time, the fact that workers

hadn't revolted in 1968 was a puzzle, and they looked for answers in theories of ideology and psychoanalysis, trying to identify the invisible forces that encouraged ordinary people to prefer the status quo to revolution.

Such questions are subtly played out in the brilliant 1979 video Distinct, by British filmmaker Stuart Marshall, which uses the genre of the setbound TV drama as a frame for a quirky dismantling of the 'ideology' of TV culture: two actors play out husband and wife dialogues, but quickly slip into disquisitions about gender stereotypes, the political limits of middle-class drama and the economic structures of TV production. It's fascinated by structuralist and psychoanalytical theory, yet seems also to treat them with a hint of self-conscious scepticism and irony, as if Marshall were aware that such approaches might distract from more pressing political questions about work, wealth and industrial relations.

I get stuck watching this, and have to dash through the other works, but Pil and Galia Kollectiv's absurdist mock-doc stands out as a more twisted contemporary take on the show's thematic: an Adam Curtis-style voiceover narrates the history of a radical experiment in management techniques in a fictional English computer company during the 1960s and 70s, which are so successful in creating a collective-spiritual consciousness among employees that they end up creating their own secret, mystical cult in the factory's basement. It's the works that refuse to be merely rehearsals of the show's discourse that work best here, eluding, contradicting and warping its otherwise sober and didactic pretences.



### TOMMA ABTS

Greengrassi

Abts must be having fun since she won the Turner Prize (in 2006), because these new paintings appear positively cheerful, or at least as cheerful as you're likely to get in Abts's formidably restrained and suppressed take on abstraction and its history. It seems as if Abts has moved on from midcentury tropes and gone all 1980s - here are fizzy alternating stripes of pastels, pinks, oranges, greys and mints, and carefully simulated spray-fades. The fields of stripes are bisected with the fragmented curves beloved of 1980s postmodern graphic designers, and at times verge on decorative pattern and textile design. Abts's trademark transformation of abstract geometries into images of abstract geometries, at one remove from the painting's surface and retreating into the past, seems more comfortable here, in its pastiche of the era which practically invented historical pastiche. Abts's art-historical snake may finally be eating its own tail, but it at least seems to be enjoying the meal.

### **DOROTA JURCZAK: KLOAKE**

Corvi-Mora

Rounding off a cold day tramping around South London and its crazy public transit system with a show by Dorota Jurczak may not be good for one's mental health. At least Corvi-Mora is upstairs from Greengrassi. Jurczak's iconography is a mix of hippy bad-trip comedown and mitteleuropean folkloric, decorative weirdness. Starey-eyed bird figures look back at you out of various paintings, alongside images of human figures with elongated faces and long, lank hair, all caught in a dreamlike state of introspective catatonia, often partly dissolving into their decorative surroundings. There's a lot of peculiar psychology going on here - one painting depicts toylike child figures and a four-legged bird strung like marionettes against dark, theatrical drapery, while vaguely parental faces look menacingly down from the wings. Body image, displacement of the ego into the symbol of the bird, becoming organic and becoming inanimate - what would Freud or Deleuze make of this? Jurczak may be very well read, or she might really feel like this inside, or probably both. It's compelling, disturbing and a bit suffocating being inside someone else's head like this, and I look for the exit. It's closing time anyway, so I bid goodnight to Greengrassi's fabulously haughty gallery girls and head of into the dark streets of Lambeth, eager to be north of the river again.



### CHRISTIANA SOULOU: LES ENFANTS TERRIBLES

Sadie Coles HQ

### LOUISE LAWLER: NO DRONES

Sprüth Magers



words: LAURA MCLEAN-FERRIS

No angels dining at the Ritz today and no nightingales singing - like they were in the old standard A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square as I cross that pedestrian deathtrap to greet EJ, my accomplice for the day. Though maybe there never were any nightingales: the German critic Carl Einstein wrote in 1929 that the use of that songbird in romantic works never has anything to do with the birds themselves; they are just sprinkled around fictional landscapes, used and abused as cheap props for romance. In fact, there's a battle among contributors on the Wikipedia page for A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square the entry suggests that it must have been robins that the lovers heard, while another contributor argues in a footnote that the made-up nightingales are the point - the singer invents an altered romantic landscape. I'm siding with the footnote on that issue: the song describes a delirious fantasy of the West End.

### JONATHAN LASKER: THE 80S

**Timothy Taylor Gallery** 

We nearly get run over by an Aston Martin as we make our way to Timothy Taylor to see some jazzy paintings. If Jonathan Lasker's paintings were people, they would doubtless be hipsters so close do they run to being wilfully ugly, clashy and brash. But I'm not a hipster-hater and I must admit I really like these paintings; they are a lot of fun and have an assertive attitude - minimal yet excessive, neat yet messy. Black ribbony lines floating on backgrounds of acid purples, greens and yellows occasionally mime a gridlike structure before collapsing into a mess of scribbly tangles. In contrast to the blacks and brights, odd slab shapes float around the canvases in a mush of dark reds, yellows and browns, reminiscent of giant meatballs or pizza. Part of the reason they look hipsterish is that they are all from the 1980s and early 90s - a period currently undergoing a style revival. Artforum called Lasker's painting 'trendy' back when they were first made. But unlike most ageing hipsters, they've still got it.

Almost antithetical to Jonathan Lasker is this show of quiet, fragile works at Sadie Coles by Athenian Christiana Soulou. Ghostly, barelythere drawings based on characters from Jean Cocteau's 1929 novel Les Enfants Terribles. Rather than attempting a particular physical depiction of the features of the three principal characters - Paul, Elizabeth and Dargelos, all looking very similar here, with tight, Cranach-like features these convey their sensations and gestures. The figures, dressed in an indeterminate form of historic costume, float in space, appearing transparent, watery, with large, expressive hands and feet. There's something cruel, languid and lazy about them, as though they are dreamily committing small acts of harm, glassy-eyed as actresses in a Lars von Trier movie.

### MERLIN CARPENTER: TATE CAFE

Simon Lee Gallery

The poster for this exhibition is all over town it's that horrible picture of Tony Blair, Noel Gallagher and Meg Mathews at a Downing Street reception in 1997, which proved iconographic of (ick) Cool Britannia. It's a mean poster for a mean show - but I suppose these are pretty mean times. The gallery is salon-hung with wilfully ugly paintings (brown paint on nasty bright white canvases that look as though they might be prestretched shop-bought affairs) of the Tate Café and its patrons. It's as though the café, with all its friendly banalities - notecards asking 'What do you think?', free copies of the Guardian and Observer - reveals the institution as a product of a weak New Labour 'culture industry'. It seems like a cheap shot to me, and not terribly well aimed, but I suppose there's something in it. Easy to say that now, though, Merlin.

I should say at this point that EJ has something to talk about – and it's not the latest exhibition of archival 1970s television works that she is curating – but a significant romantic tryst from the previous night, the details of which are now ringing around Simon Lee's stark gallery space. She sent the man in question a text message this morning, saying, 'It was really nice to see you', and received a smiley face in return. Jesus, I say. Scrabbling to find a silver lining, I offer: at least it wasn't winking. She whips out the tenyear-old Nokia and shoves it under my nose. It's a;) alright. There's nothing I can say to this. There are definitely no nightingales here.

Another Tate-referencing show. With a clear nod to the big Gerhard Richter blowout over at Tate Modern, this Louise Lawler exhibition is a display of photographs of the German painter's works, seen from angles that abstract, stretch and distort the original paintings. Photographs of paintings of photographs, then. Yet rather than capturing an increased, mechanised distance, Lawler's images add a humanising element to the paintings themselves. Civilian (2010) is a photograph of Richter's painting of a skull, Schädel, from 1983, which Lawler has photographed so that its scale appears diminished - it looks tiny within Lawler's frame. Right at the top of the photograph are two dangling picture wires, which look like a pair of nooses. But if these pictures have more pathos than Lawler's often acerbic, witty photographs, then this is thrown off by the inclusion of a glitterball and disco lights in the space, which the gallery attendants switch on for us. This 'gallery disco' is funny, and brings the critique in Lawler's earlier photographs - of art in the homes and offices of collectors - to the commercial space, while also gently ribbing the 'celebration' of Richter in his retrospective. Unlike Merlin Carpenter's digs at the big institution, it's not brattish or unkind.

### **CHAIN CHAIN CHAIN**

Bischoff/Weiss

Curated by Glenn Adamson - cocurator of the V&A's current Postmodernism exhibition, which I very much enjoyed - this group show at Bischoff/ Weiss picks up at the rather depressing point where that one left off, with artists who focus on branding and commodification. A youngish generation of artists here sculpturally explore 'preciousness' and value. Some of it's a bit obvious - works that resemble packing crates or that employ precious objects or materials in an unusual, lo-fi way – Susan Collis's stack of A4 paper, on top of which a scrunched sheet of gold leaf is displayed, should give you an idea. Collis has explored this area very fully in her career, and most interesting here is her decision to hack a chunk of plaster out of the wall of Bischoff/ Weiss and trade it for a chunk from Seventeen Gallery (who represent her), making the exchange of artists between galleries palpable and visible. Zoë Sheehan Saldaña's life jackets are handmade replicas of a standard-issue item, which she perversely makes from scratch by researching and sourcing all of the materials and then constructing them with great effort and expense. Robert Gober made girls' white ice skates in a similarly laborious fashion, but these life jackets gesture more towards emergency measures and our modern distance from the making of things.

God knows an artist-made *Life Jacket* that costs £699.99 + VAT (for this is what the price list I pick up tells me it costs) almost seems too precious actually to use to save your life if you suddenly find yourself in danger of drowning, which is a pretty good analogy for the importance that capital concerns ascribe to human life.

### JEFF WALL

White Cube, Mason's Yard

This is a lovely Jeff Wall show, in which he burlesques and complicates his own practice as a creator of staged photographic fictions. Upstairs are three 'straight' photographs of Sicily from 2007. In an enormous black-and-white picture of a rocky, arid hillside, the landscape seems to tumble towards the viewer, while opposite is another hillside, this one in colour, with an expanse of blue sky that looks utterly unreal. This landscape, with its perfectly placed olive trees and dry stone walls, looks as though it could feature in a Renaissance painting of Arcadia (though Italian painters from that period would have given their right arm for the amount of lapis lazuli pigment needed for such a huge area) were it not for the powerlines that sweep gracefully up the hill to a centrally placed pylon. The new photographs downstairs are where Wall really starts having fun, though. The first image, Young Man Wet with Rain (2011), features, yes, a young man who looks rather wet. But already I'm thinking: really? Rain? Sure you didn't just hose him down? Elsewhere is a series of four images of a costume historian looking through documentation to authenticate a garment in his collection. And then there are works which pose moral conundrums, such as Boy Falls from Tree (2010) - reminiscent of Yves Klein's famous picture Leap into the Void (1960) - which says to me: 'Well, if that boy is on a wire, then the picture is a lie, and if he's not, then quit pushing kids out of trees, Jeff'.

# THE MYSTERY OF APPEARANCE

Haunch of Venison

Haunch of Venison is definitely ahead of the curve with this one: ten British postwar painters focusing on figuration. Now that Britain looks to be heading for Europe's exits, it shouldn't be too long before there's a big funding push on British art shows that celebrate such work, but the funny aside, this is a neglected, rather untrendy area in need of exploration, and curator Catherine Lampert has dealt with it in a rigorous fashion, while leaving rather a lot of room for conversation between the works. Highlights include the academic painting style of Euan Uglow, David Hockney's drawings and Frank Auerbach's paintings of Primrose Hill. Leon Kossoff's Willesden Junction, Summer No. 1 (1966) is my favourite here – the kind of grim

brownness of the area captured alongside a sky of a deep, dark summer blue. It's a reminder of how terrible photography can be at capturing the atmosphere and physical sensations of a place.

### MICHAEL STUBBS: FIREEYE MELTDOWN

Laurent Delaye

We've seen lots of good painting today from past eras, and so perhaps Stubbs suffers by comparison, but it's hard to feel either way about these paintings. They are very nicely constructed, abstract and floaty, and there are pleasing layers of pale opacity that contrast with more transparent, stained-glassy ones. If I were trying to say something pithy, it would be 'abstract James Rosenquists for the iMac age' or something. It all seems fine: everything appears to be in order.

### MAURO PERUCCHETTI: JELLY BABY FAMILY

Halcyon Gallery

"Hi!" chirrups the high-pitched gallery assistant at the door, after we've negotiated our way past a pretty off-putting security guard. "Are you art students?" No, I reply, but don't offer anything else, because I can already see what is in this gallery and there is no way in hell I'm going to tell her what I'm really doing here. EJ shoots me a look of death and wanders off. Perucchetti's sculptures are of lifesize jelly babies made from coloured resin. Unfortunately I haven't managed to lose the gallery assistant. "Perucchetti is an artist who is fascinated by the news", she is saying, as if this is an uncommon concern. "What he likes to do most is to buy a newspaper, open it and read all the articles in it." Ah, I say. Those crazy artists. I have a quick look around at the different variations of these hideously ostentatious, mindless sculptures. I find EJ on a strange chaise longue in another room with her eyes closed, as though she's frightened that she will go blind should she train those curatorial eyes on the jelly babies. "This isn't even funny," she hisses. "I am not looking around at this." In fairness to her, I'd forgotten things could be this bad.

### KATIE CUDDON

Simon Oldfield

Christmas shoppers are crowding Bond Street with bags from Chanel, Tiffany's and the like. EJ and I are tired and delirious now. Perucchetti's jelly-baby families didn't help, and after a day dodging Aston Martins, I find that Mayfair is getting to us. I lose EJ in the jangle of festive bustle, and then spot her again with her nose pressed against the window of Yves Saint Laurent staring at a leopard-print bag. "I'll never be able

to afford it. Ever," she says. No, I agree. Do you want to riot? But then I hear what I think *must* be nightingales. A salesperson from the shop comes into the street and hands EJ the bag. "Take it, it's yours," she says, "it was meant to be." We skitter down Piccadilly, running out of time now. "Wow, who are those people going into the Ritz?", says EJ, but I have no time to look as we rush to get to Simon Oldfield, which is rather inconveniently located in Covent Garden.

I am glad we make the effort, even if it means negotiating the horror of street performers in the piazza, because Katie Cuddon's exhibition is quite the delight. Her sculptures, often ceramic, have bumpy textures that appear to register the imprint of fingers and thumbs, even elbows, which makes them look incredibly tactile and grabbable as Plasticine. Listening with a Finger in Their Ear (2011) is a grey and yellow glazed ceramic and wax sculpture that nearly resembles, and is about the scale of, a duck's head, yet the title makes me think about putting the narrower 'beak' end in my ear. Front (2011) is a white sculpture resembling a carelessly made approximation of a picture frame facing the wall, which sits atop the fireplace in the gallery's central space. What I most like about this work is the way that it creates a world of knockoffs: handmade, ill-formed versions of bodies and things.

### **CATHERINE OPIE**

Stephen Friedman Gallery

The main part of this exhibition is devoted to Opie's Girlfriends series - small black-and-white pictures of friends and lovers - which spans 15 years from the mid-8os. There's still a rawness in a work like Raven (Gun) (1989), a genuinely tense image. A woman in a living room aiming a gun, straight-armed, with her vest hoiked up to reveal the hanging chain connecting her two pierced nipples. It's impossible not to think about the horror of this chain catching on something so much so you almost forget she's holding a gun. From a contemporary vantage point, works such as Feet (Ian) (1994) look more subtly erotic than many of the S&M pics here - soft, elegant feet, resembling those of a perfect female foot model, with masculine hairy legs. Still, it's easy to say that now. In the 1990s the politics of visibility was a far more contested ground. In the backroom are picture pairs of sunrises and sunsets taken from a boat trip that Opie took between Korea and California. It's enjoyable, with this many sunups and sundowns, to try and work out whether or not dawn has a particular 'look' that dusk hasn't. EJ and I have a conversation about rising sea moisture in the morning creating particular kinds of cloud, which on reflection was utterly unscientific garbage. Is that singing? When dawn came stealing up so gold and blue, to interrupt our rendez-vous...

### ANN CRAVEN: SUMMER

Southard Reid

Last stop is Southard Reid, a gallery that has been putting on some influential shows recently, despite being located in a small space on top of Blacks members club on Dean Street. I'm not so taken with Ann Craven's portraits or her habit of turning the canvases she uses as palettes to mix her paints on into bird paintings (which look ugly in the same way that Merlin Carpenter's paintings do, but I'm not sure they are meant to). I much prefer a grid of 15 small paintings of the moon, naively and simply rendered, and blurred by sweeping brushstrokes. These amount to an enjoyable study of the moon as a light source, with sweeping hazes, glows and puffs simply communicated. The moon that lingered over London town, poor puzzled moon, he wore a frown...

We step out into the real moonlight as our West End day comes to an end. Painting dominated, with a dash of photography. Must be Richter's fault. On the plus side, we didn't see a single video, which made for a swift marathon. I say my goodbyes to EJ, who, with her new bag, skips off into the night just as light as the dancing of Fred Astaire. Me, I'm back in the square narrowly avoiding a speeding Bentley. As I'm crossing the green, I run into Ryan Gosling. Oh, hi Ryan, I say. We stand and chat for a while, and then, I may be wrong, I may be right, but I'm certainly willing to swear, that as we kissed and said goodnight, yes, a nightingale sang in Berkeley Square. I send him a text message saying, 'It was nice to see you.';) comes the response.



words: MARK RAPPOLT

### MARGARITA GLUZBERG: AVENUE DES GOBELINS

Paradise Row

"Yeah, so this isn't really an exhibition", the gallerist says, having slid out of his office to waft his hands languorously in the direction of the paintings hanging on the walls of his gallery (basement department). Fuck it, then (Shez Dawood, if you really want to know). I'm off. Next!

Ah... if only. My mind may have left the building, but my body is far too slow in following. It turns out that upstairs, on the ground floor, and before I reach the front door, there's an exhibition that's really an exhibition. The one downstairs that's not an exhibition is actually the remains of a presentation that the gallerist threw together a couple of days ago for select members of the infamous Outset patrons' group (UK division). Hmmm... was it an exhibition at the time the patrons saw it? I wonder. Is it possible that it was an exhibition then even if it is not now? In fact, perhaps none of this is an exhibition and all of it is simply an essay on David Kellogg Lewis's theory of perdurance, devised by the insanely intelligent gallerist simply to exercise his mind and entertain passersby.

While one of his assistants appears to be discussing terms - "Yeah, don't worry, we can clear all this stuff out" - for hiring out the gallery space for a fashion shoot, the gallerist pushes the hair out of his eyes, stuffs a press release into my hands and steers me towards a slide projector. I already know that in five minutes' time he's going to ask me what I think of the show. And I know that he's going to spend those five minutes telling me how brilliant it all is. I already know that whatever I reply will be a lie, engineered so as to tell him nothing at all but nevertheless to sound pleasing enough to give the gallerist a feeling of warm satisfaction that will last precisely long enough to enable me to reach the front door and walk through it without further conversation. Perhaps I'll mutter "schöne Arbeit", to give him the extra thrill that art people get from hearing rubbish put forth in the language of art history's founding father, J.J. Winckelmann. The only thing today's metaphysics lesson is about is determinism.

As the gallerist warbles on, I'm reminded of the opening to one of Simon Critchley's books:

'Philosophy does not begin in an experience of wonder, as ancient tradition contends, but rather, I think, with the indeterminate but palpable sense that something desired has not been fulfilled, that a fantastic effort has failed.'

Not that I want to prejudge the Margarita Gluzberg exhibition. Apparently it's 'a meditation on the mystical, ritual nature of material desire and consumption'. Rather like this marathon, then. Actually, it's four slide projections, one video projection and a gaggle of platinum prints. Gluzberg shoots on 35mm black-and-white film with double and triple exposures - layers of escalators, models, shopping centres, shopfronts, mannequins - which gives the whole thing a strange retro feel. This may be intentional (the title refers to a 1920s series by photographer Eugène Atget), but it seems to distance rather than link the artwork to its purported central theme: desire becomes an aesthetic, and 'meditation' upon it the preserve of the leisured wealthy - the kind of person who's going to buy, install and use a slide projector or has sufficient time to view the 84 images that have been carouselled onto one of them. (I, by the way, do not.) If you're tackling a subject - consumption that involves a certain amount of populism, this might not be the way to go. Indeed, the notion of the desiring face pressed up to the shopwindow seems strangely anachronistic in an age when shoppers are more likely to be pressing their faces to a computer screen. Unless that's the point. But for me it's not. And in any case, the gallerist is now smiling bemusedly following my bizarre German compliment. So I'm off before he recovers.

### MEMORY: CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL SCULPTURE

Rosenfeld Porcini

If Gluzberg really wanted to see 'the ritual nature of material desire and consumption', she should have come here. This is a new gallery with a beautiful space. Unfortunately, with this show they've cluttered it up like a low-budget supermarket. There are nine artists, with a range of sculpture based - pretty loosely in visual terms - around the memory conceit, but I know, amid the confusion of the installation (it appears to go in and out of offices downstairs and to include some sort of partial lapidarium upstairs), I'm going to remember very few of them individually. Ironic, huh? That said, Kaarina Kaikkonen's sculptures made out of used jackets and shirts will haunt me for some time. One, titled Existence (2011), features multiple shirts and a jacket elegantly origamied so as to appear like a recordbreaking collection of labias majora and minora. Surely even the most vaginaphilic of persons would be numb to this. Still, I do note that Andreas Blank's still lifes (everyday objects - say, a filing cabinet, lightbulb and folder-rendered in classic

sculptural materials – sandstone, slate and alabaster) and Spazio Visivo's birdbox cities (with sound) are probably worthy of further attention – preferably as solo presentations.

### GOD & CO: FRANÇOIS DALLEGRET BEYOND THE BUBBLE

Architectural Association School of Architecture

I already know I'm going to like this show, although I've never seen Dallegret's work in the flesh. Show me an art critic who says he or she is impartial and I'll show you a liar. Most commonly (and wonderfully) described as a provocateur, the French architect-draughtsman was celebrated during the 1950s and 60s for drawings of racing cars, buildings, machines and various gizmos and gadgets that utilised an aesthetic reminiscent of early Pink Panther cartoons - what might be called Pop Baroque. Like Memory, this exhibition is packed. Stuffed into the AA's rather limited gallery space are objects, photographs, plans for buildings and machines, and Dallegret's 1965 collaboration with the design critic Reyner Banham (my hero - hence the bias) for Art in America, 'A Home Is Not a House'. The project acts as a critique of inefficient American housing and offers a 'transportable standard-of-living package' in its place. That's a trailer home to you and me. But a glorious one. Dallegret's illustration declares it a 'Transcontinental Instant Split-Level Trailer Home', while Banham promises 'radiating soft light and Dionne Warwick in heart-warming stereo with well-aged protein turning in an infrared glow on the rotisserie... this could do something for a woodland glade or creek-side rock that Playboy could never do for its penthouse'. Incidentally, there's also a drawing of the artist of the future's Cosmic Opera Suit (1966), which Dallegret imagines will allow him or her to cease making concrete art objects and start sending forth 'electrical emanations'. It's a certainty that by the end of the day I'll realise that 12 volts in the privates will be less painful than this marathon.

# PAUL NOBLE: WELCOME TO NOBSON

Gagosian Gallery, Britannia Street

Just as outlandish is Paul Noble's epic 15-year project to document the fictional Nobson Newtown, here displayed via a series of intricately detailed large-scale drawings and two monumental sculptures. Here there's no techno wizardry, no gizmos and gadgets, rather a joyous tribute to, and send-up of, the depressing optimism of British new town schemes of the 1960s and 70s-the most famous of which, Milton Keynes, marks a priority change in urban planning from the establishment of civic pride to lifestyle

provision; indeed the city has been described as fostering a "city-consciousness" which can be gauged by how quickly you can get to the city centre for a McDonald's hamburger' rather than the traditional town square with town hall, library, etc arrangement. The show opens with the words 'Welcome to Nobson' spelled out by a mixture of Noble's preferred bunker-buildings and the story of God's creation of the earth. And from there the madness descends as Noble draughts his way through monuments, mazes and memorials, the human digestive system (Nobson is inhabited by shits) and the grand follies of civic pride. Brilliant.

### GRAYSON PERRY: THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN CRAFTSMAN

British Museum

From the minute I saw a teddy bear seated on a motorcycle, I knew I was going to hate this show. *Ugggh...* here we go - 'time to watch the transvestite ego land', I thought as I scowled at the family trundling into the show in front of me. The funny thing is that I didn't (hate it, the scowling I did) quite the reverse, in fact. So much for determinism. Perhaps, thanks to Grayson, I've even demonstrated the existence of free will. (Note to self: remember to phone Robert Hilary Kane and tell him the exciting news.) Located in one of the British Museum's least-appealing spaces, the show comprises new works by Perry dotted through a selection of objects without named authors from the museum's storage bunker. Creating an experience - a trip - in which his works become a series of incidental discoveries along the way. You're left simply looking at things as they pass by and constructing whatever narratives you think fit.

### CHARLES AVERY: PLACE DE LA REVOLUTION

Pilar Corrias

Like Noble, Charles Avery is an artist who has devoted himself to depicting a world of his invention, in this case titled The Islanders. This exhibition centres around a large drawing of the square in the exhibition title - in which people cycle, roll tyres and generally revolve around a monument that looks like it was derived from a DNA double helix. It lacks the obsessive madness of Noble and Dallegret's projections; it's far too knowing as well (Onomatopoeia is the capital of the Island). Noble and Dallegret convince you that they make work because they have to. Avery's by comparison feels overly constructed and generally rather forced. On the way downstairs (where Avery has a film) I pass a room hung with photographs by Leigh Ledare. It's brilliantly seedy but it's not an exhibition. It's just mysteriously there. Time to call my ontologist.



### SERGEY BRATKOV: SCREAM

Regina Gallery

This exhibition borrows its title from Edvard Munch and its impetus from Anders Behring Breivik's recent killing spree. The ground floor of the gallery contains photographs documenting the artist's 2006 journey through Norway, which feature flag-waving youths parading through the countryside (and boast titles like *Crusader* and



National Landscape), gutted, smoked and drying fish, sheep skulls on fenceposts and the only black man in the village. In short, the photographs look like they're recording a nation of (rightwing) nutters. A generous critic might frame the artist's revival of these works as part of the process of explaining the inexplicable. But I'm meanspirited, and to me they merely seem contextless and opportunistic. That said, the photographs of mud treatments in a gloomy Odessan health spa in the downstairs gallery, featuring corpselike patients wrapped in mud-splattered towels and

lying in what looks like the world's least hygienic lavatory, are much more powerful.

### PAUL LEE: MOON RIVER

Modern Art

Stuart Shave's Modern Art space looks even cleaner and brighter after that. All the more so since Lee has a fetish for towels and dishcloths. The exhibition features a whole bunch of them cut, mutilated, stitched, stretched and wired into

wall sculptures that describe a series of geometric forms and their extensions. *Untitled (Washcloth Horizon)* (2011), for example, is a collection of cloths, stretched into a grid of two rows of squares, the first row projecting at a 90-degree angle from the wall, the second hanging 90-degrees downwards from that. Perhaps that's the perfect visualisation of how the mathematics of the grid meets the whimsy of Lee's materials (there are also works constructed from tambourines on show) to create a poetry that's as delicate as Bratkov's was harsh.



### KIMBER SMITH

Modern Art

Wow! Stuart Shave has a second exhibition that's actually an exhibition. Does he not understand that running a gallery in 2011 is all about throwing up various challenges to the nature of existence and being? Smith's show features works on paper (largely from the 1960s and 70s) that look as if they might be recording the interaction of biological cells or the paths of atomic particles (using a Feynmanesque notation). Others might describe it as an expressive semigeometric abstraction. But I'm the author of this. They're not.

### **OMA/PROGRESS**

Barbican Art Gallery

Curated by Brussels-based collective Rotor and housed in the rubble left behind by the previous exhibition at the Barbican, this is not so much a presentation of work by one of the most significant architectural practices (headed by Rem Koolhaas) of the past three decades as it is of the working practice of the office. Featuring everything from staff 'thoughts' (one employee, for example, maps the movement of his mouse during the course of a working day and then speculates that he might be better off being paid according to distance travelled), a live stream of the roughly 3.5 million images on the OMA server, a couple of lumpen objects that may or may not (no one knows) be or have been models or research from the practice archives (note to self: send photos of objects to Lewis), speculation about the past and future of museums and social housing, as well as documentation and anecdotes about the firm's

greatest hits – among them the Maison à Bordeaux, CCTV building in Beijing and Kunsthal Rotterdam (in which the full height of one passageway can never be repainted because of health and safety laws) – all aligned to the furiously optimistic (or depressing – the question is left open) sense of 'progress' throughout. You're left in no doubt that contemporary architecture is about the accumulation of data and the transfer of imagery (Koolhaas and Co work miracles using the aesthetic properties of various graphs). This is a far cry from Paul Noble and his pencil, but no less interesting for that.

## RYAN MCGINLEY: WANDERING COMMA

Alison Jacques Gallery

Ryan McGinley is big. In fact he's never been bigger. The seven photographs presented here are in the biggest format (280 x 183 cm) he's ever used. The imagery is kinda cheesy: *Dove* (2011) is a black-and-white print of a cross-armed woman, her breasts and her lips and a fluttering dove, like the perfect cover for a Prince single; *Purple Beacon* (2011) features the backs of a pair of youths in a purple sea waving flares at a purple sky. In general the works are incredibly calming – the kind of thing that a certain spa in Odessa should maybe think about buying to lift the mood. Indeed, perhaps that's what McGinley does best – capture a cool, calm, placeless vibe.

### **GRANDMATERIA II**

Gallery Libby Sellers

In a strange way, Grandmateria II picks up from and expands on where Andreas Blank (if you remember him from earlier - heh heh heh) left off: exploiting what a person who has read too many novels belonging to the fantasy genre might call a material 'alchemy' to shift our view of everyday objects and the everyday world. (Frodo, who wrote the press release for this show, refers to a philosopher's stone.) Stuart Haygarth's Tail Light (2011), for example, is a rather beautiful chandelier constructed out of the taillights of various vehicles. Fabien Cappello's Brick Glass (2010), a drinking glass melting onto a stem/stand comprising a single brick, describes a weird Venetian vernacular, and his Christmas Tree Stool (2010-11) recycles festive waste into beautiful furniture. Riffing on ecology, economy, technology, ontology and fantasy, a better conclusion to this day's adventure would be hard to find. So I'm not going to go looking.

#### RHA EXHIBITION PROGRAMME 2012

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Carey Clarke PPRHA
The Horse Show

March 16 - April 22 Brendan Earley

May 29 - August 18 182nd Annual Exhibition

September 7 - October 28 FUTURES 12 Marlene McCarthy

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## VISIT THE RHA GALLERY



The RHA Gallery is one of Dublin's principal public art galleries, in Dublin city centre, located just five minutes from St. Stephen's Green, showing an innovative mixture of Irish and International contemporary art.

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onathan Yeo is a British portrait painter and is perhaps best known for his take on Tony Blair. In that 2008 painting, Blair's face is etched with worry, the red poppy on his lapel a signifier overloaded with meaning. Depending on whom you speak to, Yeo has caught him either as the unrepentant warmonger or as the exhausted, remorseful good guy who tried his best. Yeo has become, for the famous, the go-to executor of self-image capture, painting those who know they will go down in the history books, those whose egos tell them attention must be paid, their deep need expressed in their desire to 'get me as I am'. When a presidential commission for George W. Bush was cancelled in 2007, Yeo cannily decided to make an image of Bush that was a collage of clippings from pornographic magazines. This led to other similarly constructed works capturing Tiger Woods, Mary Whitehouse and Sarah Palin.

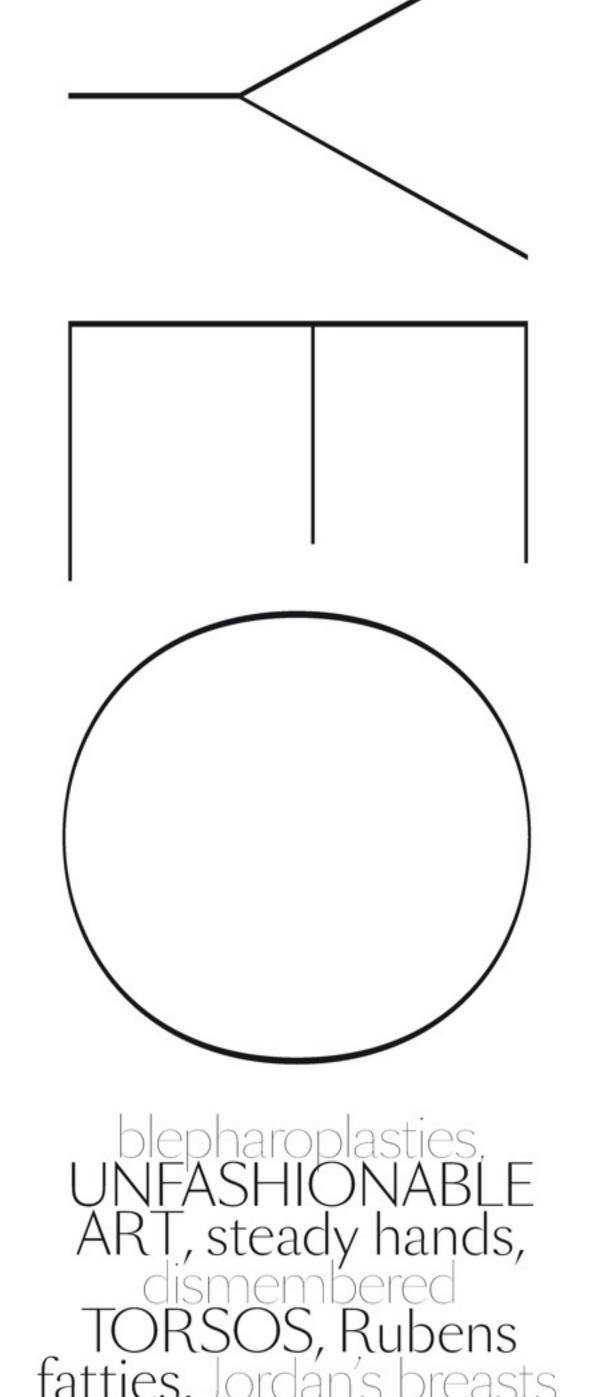
Self-taught while recovering from Hodgkin's disease in his early twenties, Yeo has had more than his share of dealings with the medical profession. His new work reveals a fascination with surgery and recalls Christian Schad's Operation (1929). Like Schad, Yeo found himself captivated by the precision of the surgeon's hands. Writing on Schad and his keenly observing eye, Wieland Schmied commented that it 'cuts so deep that he penetrates under the skin and into the flesh, as if he is dissecting the body of his victim'. There is something of this in Yeo's best portraiture, a revisiting of the Neue Sachlichkeit ethos. Yeo's love of Lucian Freud is apparent; Jenny Saville and John Currin are also conversationally name-checked in admiration. We meet in his London studio prior to the opening of his new show You're Only Young Twice at Lazarides gallery. We are surrounded by images of breasts; oil paintings of pre- and postoperative interventions. Orlan and Genesis P-Orridge come to mind. The ghost of Piero Manzoni and his Living Sculptures (1961), too, stalks the room.

#### ArtReview

These new works are something of a departure. Why work with surgeons?

#### Jonathan Yeo

It was a conversation with a surgeon friend of mine that kicked off the project. Doing the research, meeting with the surgeons, patients, getting them to volunteer – once you explain it to them, they got the idea. The cosmetic surgeons,



words JOHN QUIN

facing page: **Rhytidectomy I**, 2011. © the artist and Lazarides, London they have their own aesthetic, their own authorship if you like, and that's really interesting. I mentioned it facetiously to the two surgeons I was working with in London and they said, 'We can recognise another surgeon's work'. So I see the surgeons as artists, and it's me documenting, doing the science if you will, recording it. And the surgeons, intentionally or not, are signing their work. The original idea was to do 'before' and 'after' images so that you can compare the two – again, a slightly scientific thing. They also remind you of Venus, dismembered torsos, classical sculpture...

You've left in the surgical markings...

I find the markings strangely beautiful - they are ambiguous. I didn't know what they were at first, then realised that this is where the knife will go through. 'Cut here.' They look abstract, decorative. That one there looks tribal. They attract me as external observations - these are the surgeon's pen marks, his changes of mind, his casualness. That, combined with the realisation that this is where he's going to cut. It all seemed casually barbaric but incredibly precise. I looked at a lot of material. These operations often transform lives; calling it 'just vanity' is too reductive, though it teeters on it. Only about five years ago a woman might ask for breasts to be like the model Jordan's, but not now; now they want them normal-shaped. Body fashion has always been with us - think of the Rubens fatties - but today it's all so much faster in its evolution.

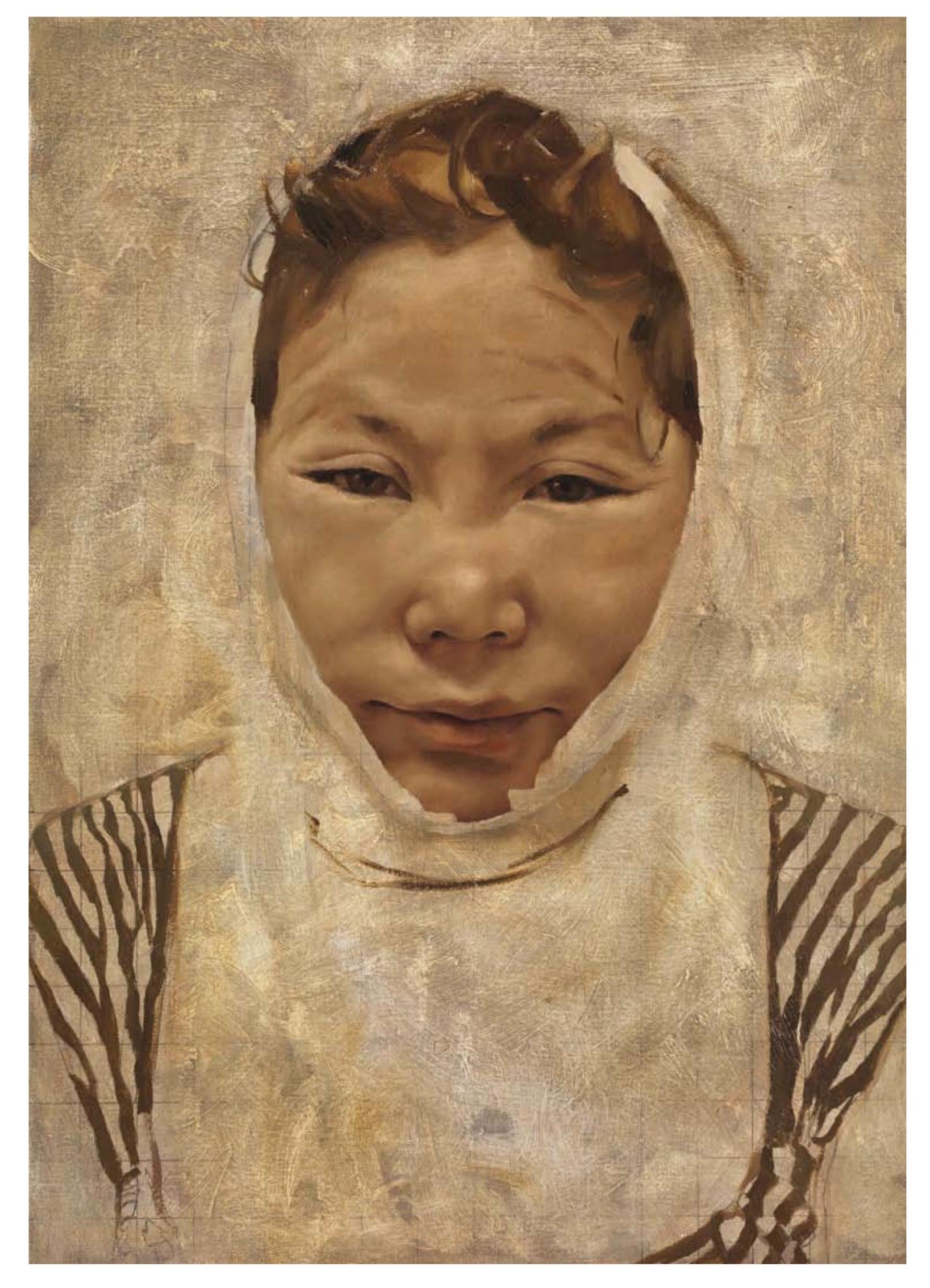
Are the surgeons then imposing their own aesthetic? Do they do it that way because that's the kind of breast they idealise?

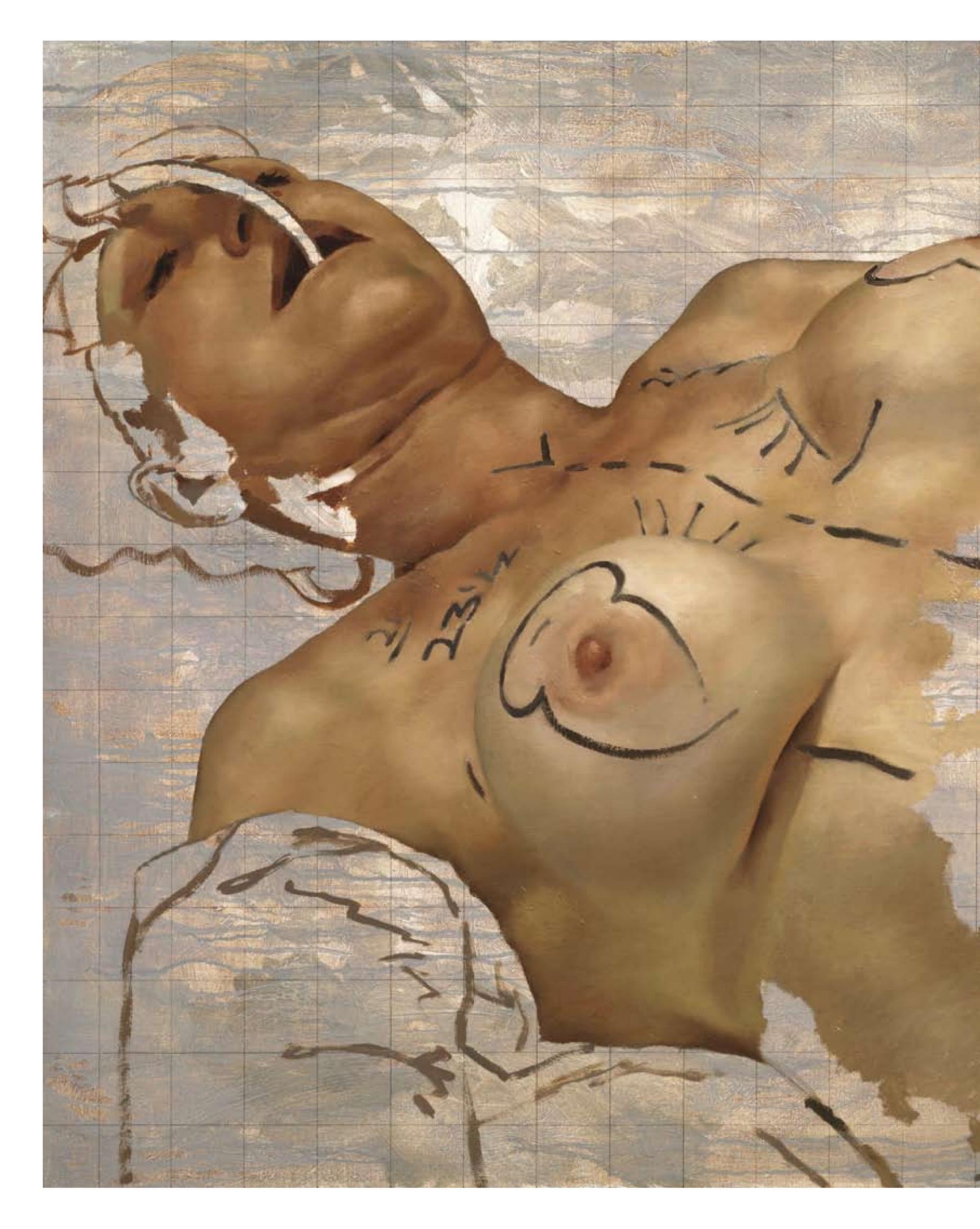
JY Possibly. Looking at the diptych there – I thought people might prefer the 'after' image, but I'm intrigued that folk I ask show a 50-50 split, so it's hard to generalise on the outcome, the result of the surgery and what others think about it.

Given your previous work using porn, how much do you think porn imagery dictates the decisions people make to have cosmetic surgery for breast augmentation, labiaplasty and so on?

It's an issue. Fashion again. That's partly why I got more interested in the surgery work. The pornographisation of society, it's all

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moving so fast. I don't think John Currin's porn-inspired works are an irony thing, strictly speaking – I think he's nostalgic for that time before the expansion in surgery, the imperfect models with lots of hair; the body as is.

Parts of the canvas are left deliberately abstract, like Robert Ryman even.

Partly that's the way I leave things, without taking it to the edge. I wanted to leave the grid lines on: it looks more scientific, trying to do this precisely and by not exaggerating images. So I'm painting in a realist way – if I go right to the edge, it looks like a photo.

Were you conscious of an archival impulse, that in 50 years' time no one might be doing these?

JY Totally. In 100 years' time it will be all very different. We might be amazed looking back at the huge amount we invested in self-advancement and vanity. These operations are still risky, still painful and a bit barbaric, thus it was obvious to me as a painter to capture it now.

They remind me of Henry Tonks and his drawings of disfigured soldiers from the First World War that are now viewed less as surgical outcomes and more as powerful descriptors of a traumatised past.

IY Right. My editorial line was to keep the thing as scientific as possible, doing it precisely – be faithful to the source material. Somehow I think they end up looking a bit cubist.

And yet most surgeons as draughtsmen, draughtswomen, however technically skilled, are still somewhat artless.

It goes back to Leonardo and, I guess, the artificial line between science and art. I saw my first facelift recently – when you're in there you're mesmerised by the artfulness of what they are doing; they are like master craftsmen making a musical instrument at high speed. They made me feel incredibly clumsy! I look at the surface of faces, and seeing the facial nerve, seeing the muscles that pull the face – this was a revelation.

# TO LOOK AT ME. IT IS VERY VOYEURISTIC, THIS INTEREST IN THE SURFACE

You both need good hands...

Secondary Augmentation

© the artist and Lazarides, London

Mastopexy, 2011.

JY They have to imagine what things are going to look like, what the faces, the breasts will end up like – so their ideas of perfection are key. They have to make an imaginative leap like an artist.

Let's talk about your portraits. Were you deliberately taking on something that was out of fashion?

Yes. I'm a bit contrary, I hate being told what to do, I like doing what others aren't doing. I'm not so concerned about fashion in art. Faces rivet me, and I thought: get good at them first.

You're not a photorealist like, say, Jason Brooks. You're interested in the 'what does this face tell us?' idea.

JY Can the face express personality? I think it can. Warhol, Picasso, Freud – many of their most famous works were of faces and were vehicles for their experiments. So, yes, I'm interested in trying to capture that elusive something.

Michael Fried, in Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before, goes on about the new photography and how it tries to avoid overt theatricality, tries to catch people unawares. You prefer the direct gaze.

JY I prefer the person to look at me, yes. It is very voyeuristic, this interest in the surface. I go for a more direct, more confrontational approach. I grab their attention, try and get an insight into them. I have to have their eyes!

Is there a 'bingo' moment, when you think: I've caught them? Can you tease that out?

If it will happen. I like getting to know them. I've no idea if there will be the 'aha' moment, that's part of the fun of it. So they are part biography, part document. If the person is famous and you are well aware of them, you have to try and unlearn that, leave it at the door as it were, and that can be quite difficult.

Your new show is called You're Only Young Twice. Do you remember the blepharoplasty scene in the Bond movie You Only Live Twice?

JY Oh, yeah! They try and make Sean Connery look Japanese! That was never going to work...:

Jonathan Yeo: You're Only Young Twice is on at Lazarides, London, until 21 January

#### Listings USA, Asia, Middle East & Europe

#### **UNITED STATES**

#### **David Zwirner**

525 & 533 West 19th Street
New York, NY 10011
+1 212 727 2070
information@davidzwirner.com
www.davidzwirner.com
On Kawara: Date Painting(s) in New York & 136
Other Cities
to 11 Jan
Open 10-6, Tue-Sat

#### **Doosan Gallery**

533 West 25th St New York, NY 10001 +1 212 242 6343 info@doosangallery.com www.doosangallery.com Donghee Koo 19 Jan - 18 Feb Open 10-6, Tue-Sat

#### **Matthew Marks Gallery**

1062 North Orange Grove, Los Angeles, CA 90046 +1 323 654 1830 info@matthewmarks.com www.matthewmarks.com Ellsworth Kelly: Los Angeles 20 Jan - 7 April Open 10-6, Tue-Sat

#### Oh Wow

937 N. La Cienega Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90069
+1 310 652 1711
info@oh-wow.com
www.oh-wow.com
Daniel Arsham:
the fall, the ball, and the wall
to 16 Feb
Terry Richardson: Terrywood
4 Feb - 3 Mar
Open 11-6, Tue-Sat

#### The Pace Gallery

32 East 57th Street
New York, NY 10022
+1 212 421 3292
info2@thepacegallery.com
www.thepacegallery.com
Alfred Jensen/Sol LeWitt:
Systems and Transformation
to 11 Feb
Open 9.30-6, Tue-Fri; 10-6, Sat

#### The Pace Gallery

534 West 25th Street
New York, NY 10001
+1 212 929 7000
info2@thepacegallery.com
www.thepacegallery.com
Roberto Matta: A Centennial Celebration
to 28 Jan
Open 10-6, Tue-Sat

#### The Pace Gallery

545 West 22nd Street
New York, NY 10001
+1 212 989 4258
info2@thepacegallery.com
www.thepacegallery.com
Bosco Sodi: *Ubi sunt*to 21 Jan
Open 10-6, Tue-Sat

#### The Pace Gallery

510 West 25th Street
New York, NY 10001
+1 212 255 4044
info2@thepacegallery.com
www.thepacegallery.com
Jean Dubuffet: *The Last Two Years*20 Jan - 10 Mar
Open 10-6, Tue-Sat

#### **Thomas Solomon Gallery**

427 Bernard Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
+1 323-275-1687
info@thomassolomongallery.com
www.thomassolomongallery.com
Jonas Lipps
to 5 Feb
Open 12-6, Wed-Sat

#### Tracy Williams, Ltd.

521 West 23rd Street, 2nd Floor New York, NY 10011 +1 212 229 2757 info@tracywilliamsltd.com www.tracywilliamsltd.com Murad Khan Mumtaz: *Return* to 11 Feb Open 11-6, Tue-Sat

#### CHINA

Today Art Museum
No 32 Baiziwan Road, Chaoyang district,
Beijing
+86 136 0133 2991
twang@tengzhongart.com
www.todayartmuseum.com
He Sen: Conversation with the Moon
12-24 Feb
Open 10-5, Mon-Sun

#### **UNITED ARABEMIRATES**

#### Mathaf Arab Museum of Modern Art

Education City off Al-Luqta Street P.O. Box 2777 mathaf\_info@qma.org.qa www.mathaf.org.qa +974 4487 6662 / +974 4402 8855 Cai Guo Qiang: Saraab to 26 May Open 11-6, Tue-Sun; 3-9 Fri

#### **Sharjah Art Foundation**

PO Box 19989, Sharjah +971 6 568 5050 www.sharjahart.org info@sharjahart.org March Meeting 2012 Working with Artists & Audiences on Commissions & Residencies 17–19 Mar Open 10-5, Sat-Mon

#### **AUSTRIA**

#### **Hubert Winter**

Breite Gasse 17, 1070 Vienna +43 1 5240976 office@galeriewinter.at www.galeriewinter.at Birgit Jurgenssen to 4 Feb

#### Sammlung Verbund

Vertical Gallery at VERBUND headquarters Am Hof 6a, 1010 Vienna Cindy Sherman: That's me - That's not me. Early works. 26 Jan - 16 May Open to public with guided tours every Wednesday, 6 pm

#### Secession

Wiener Secession, Association of Visual Artists Friedrichstraße 12, A-1010 Vienna +43 1 587 53 07 office@secession.at www.secession.at David Maljkovic, Attila Csorgo, Lecia Dole-Recio to 5 Feb Open, 10-6, Tue-Sun

#### Thaddaeus Ropac

Mirabellplatz 2, 5020 Salzburg +43 662 881 393 office@ropac.at www.ropac.net Jason Martin 24 Jan - Mar 24 Open 10-6, Tue-Fri; 10-2, Sat

#### BELGIUM

#### Almine Rech

20 Rue de l'Abbaye Abdijstraat,
B-1050 Brussels
+32 2 648 5684
brussels@alminerech.com
www.alminerech.com
Don Brown, Matthias Bitzer
to 23 Feb
Open 11-7, Tue-Sat

#### CZECH REPUBLIC

#### Galerie Rudolfinum

Alšovo embankment 12
110 01 Prague 1
+420 222 319 293
galerie@rudolfinum.org
www.galerierudolfinum.cz
Jan Hisek: Night Rider
to 26 Feb
David LaChapelle: So He Said
to 26 Feb

#### DENMARK

#### Nicolai Wallner

Ny Carlsbergvej 68 OG DK-1760 Copenhagen +45 32570970 nw@nicolaiwallner.com www.nicolaiwallner.com Nina Beier to 22 Jan Graham/Mangold 3 Feb - 17 Mar



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#### Listings Europe

#### FRANCE

#### **Almine Rech**

19 rue de Saintonge, 75003 Paris +33 1 45 83 71 90 paris@alminerech.com www.alminerech.com Mark Hagen: TBA de Nouveau 13 Jan - 23 Feb Patrick Hill: Curls, Kinks, and Waves 13 Jan - 23 Feb Open 11-7, Tue-Sat

#### Art Paris 2012

Grand Palais, Paris 29 Mar – 1 Apr www.artparis.fr

#### Thaddaeus Ropac

7, rue Debelleyme, 75003 Paris +33 1 4272 9900 galerie@ropac.net www.ropac.net Jonathan Lasker: *Recent Paintings* Jean Marc Bustamante: *Peintures Carrées* to 2 Feb Open 10-7, Tue-Sat

#### **Emmanuel Perrotin**

76 Rue de Turenne &
10 Impasse St Claude, 75003 Paris
+33 1 42 16 79 79
info@perrotin.com
www.perrotin.com
Lionel Esteve / Dan Flavin
to 3 Mar
Open 11-7, Tue-Sat

#### Myrvold > Myworld

15 rue Sambre et Meuse
75010 Paris
+33 6 07968552
myworld@pia-myrvold.com
www.pia-myrvold.com
By appointment in Paris
Pia Myrvold:
FLOW at No Gallery, New York
3 Feb - 3 Mar
FLOW at LACDA, Los Angeles
to 24 Feb

#### GERMANY

#### Galerie Daniel Blau

Odeonsplatz 12, 80539 München +49 89 29 73 42 contact@danielblau.com www.danielblau.com Rare Nasa: *Photographs* to 31 Jan Open Tue – Fri, 11–6

#### **Max Hetzler**

Oudenarder Straße 16-20 D-13347 Berlin +49 30 459 77 42-0 info@maxhetzler.com www.maxhetzler.com Monica Bonvicini 18 Feb - 14 Apr

#### Tanya Leighton

Kurfürstenstraße 156 10785 Berlin +49 30 221607770 info@tanyaleighton.com www.tanyaleighton.com Sean Edwards 26 Nov - 28 Jan

#### **IRELAND**

#### Douglas Hyde Gallery

Trinity College, Dublin 2
+353 1 896 1116
dhgallery@tcd.ie
www.douglashydegallery.com
Mike Disfarmer
to 25 Jan
Merlin James: In The Gallery
3 Feb - 8 Mar
Open 11-6, Mon-Fri

#### Kerlin Gallery

Anne's Lane, South Anne Street,
Dublin 2
+35 3 1 670 9096
gallery@kerlin.ie
www.kerlin.ie
Richard Gorman: Kozo
20 Jan to 25 Feb
Open 10-5.45 Mon-Fri; 11-4.30, Sat

#### Mother's Tankstation

41-3 Watling Street, Ushers Island, Dublin 8 +35 3 1 671 7654 gallery@motherstankstation.com www.motherstankstation.com Nevin Aladag 15 Feb - 24 Mar Open 12-6, Thu-Sat

#### ITALY

#### Collezione Maramotti

Via Fratelli Cervi 66
Reggio Emilia
+ 39 0522 382484
info@collezionemaramotti.org
www.collezionemaramotti.org
Huma Bhabba: *Players*12 Feb-15 April
Kaarina Kaikkoken: *Are We Still Going?*26 Feb - 15 April

#### **Brand New Gallery**

Via Farini 32, 20159 Milan +39 02 8905 3083 info@brandnew-gallery.com www.brandnew-gallery.com Anthony James: Consciousness and Portraits of Sacrifice Into The Surface (Group Show) to 23 Feb Open 11–1, 2.30–7, Tue–Sat

#### MAXXI

Via Guido Reni, 4A,
00196 Rome
+39 06 3996 7350
info@fondazionemaxxi.it
www.fondazionemaxxi.it
Indian Highway
to 29 Jan
Open 11–7 Tue–Fri, Sun; 11–22 Thu–Sat

#### Monica de Cardenas

Via Francesco Vigano 4
20124 Milano
+39 02 2901 0068
info@monicadecardenas.com
www.monicadecardenas.com.com
Stephan Balkenhol
to 25 Feb
Open 10-1, 3-7, Tue-Fri; 12-7 Sat

#### **Workshop Arte Contemporane**

Dorsoduro 2793 / A 30123 Venezia +39 041 099 0156 info@workshopvenice.com www.worshopvenice.com Anna M. R. Freeman: *Chamber* 11 Feb – 24 Mar Open 10.30–1, 2.30–7, Mon–Sat

#### **NETHERLANDS**

#### Grimm

Eerste Jacob Van Campenstraat 23–25, 1072 BB Amsterdam +31 6 1488 3834 info@grimmgallery.com www.grimmgallery.com Jess Flood-Padock 14 Jan – 18 Feb Open 12–6, Wed–Sat

#### de Appel Arts Centre

Eerste Jacob van Campenstraat 59,
Amsterdam
+31 0 20 6255651
info@deappel.nl
www.deappel.nl
Sven Augusti jnen: Spectres
to 12 Feb
Open 11-6, Tue-Sun

#### **SPAIN**

#### Helga de Alvear

Calle del Doctor Fourquet, 12, 28012 Madrid +34 91 468 05 06 www.helgadealvear.com Doug Aitken: *Black Mirror* 19 Jan – 10 Mar Open 11–7, Tue–Sat

#### Centro de Artes Visuales Fundacion Helga de Alvear

Calle de Pizarro, 8, 0003 Cáceres +34 92 762 64 14 general@fundacionhelgadealvear.es www.fundacionhelgadealvear.es *Group Show* Open 10–2 & 5–8, Tue–Fri; 10–2.30, Sun

#### SWITZERLAND

#### Galerie Peter Kilchmann

Zahnradstrasse 21
8005 Zürich
+41 44 278 10 10
info@peterkilchmann.com
www.peterkilchmann.com
Javier Tellez
20 Jan - 25 Feb
Open 10-6, Tue-Fri, 11-5 Sat

#### Mai 36

Ramistrasse 37 CH-8001 Zurich +41 44 261 68 80 mail@mai36.com www.mai36.com Manfred Pernice Martin Stadeli: .....RINO through Jan Tue-Fri, 11-6.30, Sat 11-4

#### **Europe & South Africa Listings**

#### **Urs Meile**

Rosenberghöhe 4, 6004 Luzern +41 41 420 33 18 galerie@galerieursmeile.com www.galerieursmeile.com Julia Steiner: *Consitence of Time* to 14 Jan 10-6 Tue-Fri, Sat (by appointment)

#### UNITED KINGDOM

#### **Alison Jacques Gallery**

16-18 Berners Street
London W1T 3LN
+44 (0)207 631 4720
info@alisonjacquesgallery.com
www.alisonjacquesgallery.com
Catherine Yass: Lighthouse
13 Jan - 11 Feb
Open 10-6, Tue-Fri

#### Arnolfini

16 Narrow Quay, Bristol +44 117 917 2300 info@arnolfini.org.uk www.arnolfini.org.uk Museum show Part 2 including: Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind (Khalil Rabah), Danger Museum (Øyvind Renberg & Miho Shimizu), The Museum of American Art, Museo Salinas (Vicente Razo), Museum of Non-Participation (Karen Mirza & Brad Butler), Museum of Television Culture (Jaime Davidovich), Victoria and Alferd Museum (Åbäke), Hu Xiangqian's Museum (Hu Xiangqian), Museum of Forgotten History (Maarten Vanden Eynde), Museum of Incest (Simon Fujiwara) to 19 Feb Open 10-6, Tue-Sun

#### Camden Arts Centre

Open 10-6, Tue-Sun, 10-9, Wed London NW3 6DG +44 20 7472 5500 info@camdenartscentre.org www.camdenartscentre.org Raphael Hefti: Launching Rockets never Gets Old 20 Jan - 18 March

#### Cell Project Space

258 Cambridge Heath Road London E2 9DA +442072413600 info@cellprojects.org www.cellprojects.org Laura Buckley: *Fata Morgana* 20 Jan - 26 Feb Open 12-6, Fri-Sun

#### **Eastside Projects**

86 Heath Mill Lane
Birmingham, B9 4AR
+44 121 771 1778
info@eastsideprojects.org
www.eastsideprojects.org
Painting Show
25 Nov - 25 Feb
Open Thu 12-6.30, 12-5 Fri-Sat

#### Herbert Art Gallery & Museum

Jordan Well, Coventry, CV1 5QP +24 7683 236 info@theherbert.org www.theherbert.org George Shaw: *I woz ere* 18 October - 11 March Open 10-4, Mon-Sat, 12-4, Sun

#### Limoncello

15a Cremer Street, London, E2 8HD +44 207 739 2363 limoncello@limoncellogallery.co.uk www.limoncellogallery.co.uk James Ferris: 5050 26 Jan - 25 Feb Open 11-6, Thu-Sat

#### **Lisson Gallery**

29 Bell Street
London, NW1 5BY
+ 44 20 7724 2739
contact@lissongallery.com
www.lissongallery.com
Carmen Herrera
1 Feb - 03 Mar
Open 10-6, Mon-Fri, 11-5, Sat

#### **Lisson Gallery**

52-4 Bell Street, London NW1 5DA +44 20 7724 2739 contact@lissongallery.com www.lissongallery.com Santiago Sierra: Dedicated to the Workers and Unemployed 1 Feb - 3 Mar Open 10-6, Mon-Fri; 11-5, Sat

#### New Art Centre

Roche, Court, East Winterslow Salisbury, Wilts SP5 1BG +44 1980 862244 nac@sculpture.uk.com www.sculpture.uk.com John Hubbard 4 Feb - 5 Apr Open 11-4, Mon-Sun

#### Rosenfeld Porcini

37 Rathbone street
london w1t 1nz
+44 207 637 1133
emily@rosenfeldporcini.com
www.rosenfeldporcini.com
Aída Rubio González:
La vida es un sueño
to 20 Feb
Open 11-7, Tue-Sat

#### Sadie Coles

4 New Burlington Place, London W1S 2HS +44 20 7493 8611 info@sadiecoles.com www.sadiecoles.com Paloma Varga Weisz to 25 Feb Open 11–6, Tue–Sat

#### Simon Lee Gallery

12 Berkeley Street, London, W1J 8DT +44 20 7491 0100 info@simonleegallery.com www.simonleegallery.com Toby Ziegler 20 Jan - 25 Feb Open 10-6, Mon-Sat

#### Stephen Friedman Gallery

25-8 Old Burlington Street
London, W1S 3AN
+44 20 7494 1434
info@stephenfriedman.com
www.stephenfriedman.com
David Shrigley:
Arms Fayre
8 Feb - 10 Mar
Open 10-6, Tue-Fri, 11-5, Sat

#### TENDERPIXEL

10 Cecil Court
London WC2N 4HE
+447379 9464
mail@tenderpixel.com
www.tenderpixel.com
Patrick Coyle: To Draw A Blank
14 Jan – 18 Feb
Open 1–7, Wed–Sat

#### **Turner Contemporary**

Rendezvous, Margate, Kent, CT9 1HG +44 1843 233 000 info@turnercontemporary.org www.turnercontemporary.org Hamish Fulton: Walk 17 Jan - 17 May Open 10-7, Tue-Thu; 10-10, Fri

#### Victoria Miro Gallery

16 Wharf Road, London N1 7RW +44 20 7336 8109 info@victoria-miro.com www.victoria-miro.com Yayoi Kusama: New Paintings 10 Feb - 5 Apr Open 10-6, Tue-Sat

#### **SOUTH AFRICA**

#### 34 Fine Art

2nd Floor, The Hills Building, Buchanan Square, 160 Sir Lowry Road, Woodstock, Cape Town +27 21 461 1863 info@34fineart.com www.34fineart.com *Relate* to 18 Feb Open 10.34-4.34, Tue-Fri; 10.34-1.34 Sat

#### Brundyn + Gonsalves

71 Loop Street, Cape Town +27 21 424 5150 info@brundyngonsalves.com www.brundyngonsalves.com Tom Cullberg: New Works 1 Feb - 14 Mar Open 9-5 Mon-Fri; 10-2, Sat

#### **SMAC Art Gallery**

1st Floor De Wet Centre, Church Street, Stellenbosch +27 21 887 3607 info@smacgallery.com www.smacgallery.com Nel Erasmus: Review to 1 Mar Open 9-5, Mon-Fri; 9-3.30, Sat

#### **SMAC Cape Town**

60 New Church Street (Access off Buitengracht), Cape Town, 8001 +27 21 422 5100 info@smacgallery.com www.smacgallery.com Simon Stone: New Paintings to Feb Open 9-5, Mon-Fri; 10-2, Sat

#### Whatiftheworld Gallery

Argyle Rd, Woodstock, 7025 Cape Town +27 21 802 311 info@whatiftheworld.com www.whatiftheworld.com Cameron Platter: Fucking Hell to 23 Jan 10-5, Tue-Fri; 10-2, Sat

Listings 117



Le Thanh Son, Flower Field, 110 x 130 cm, 2011.

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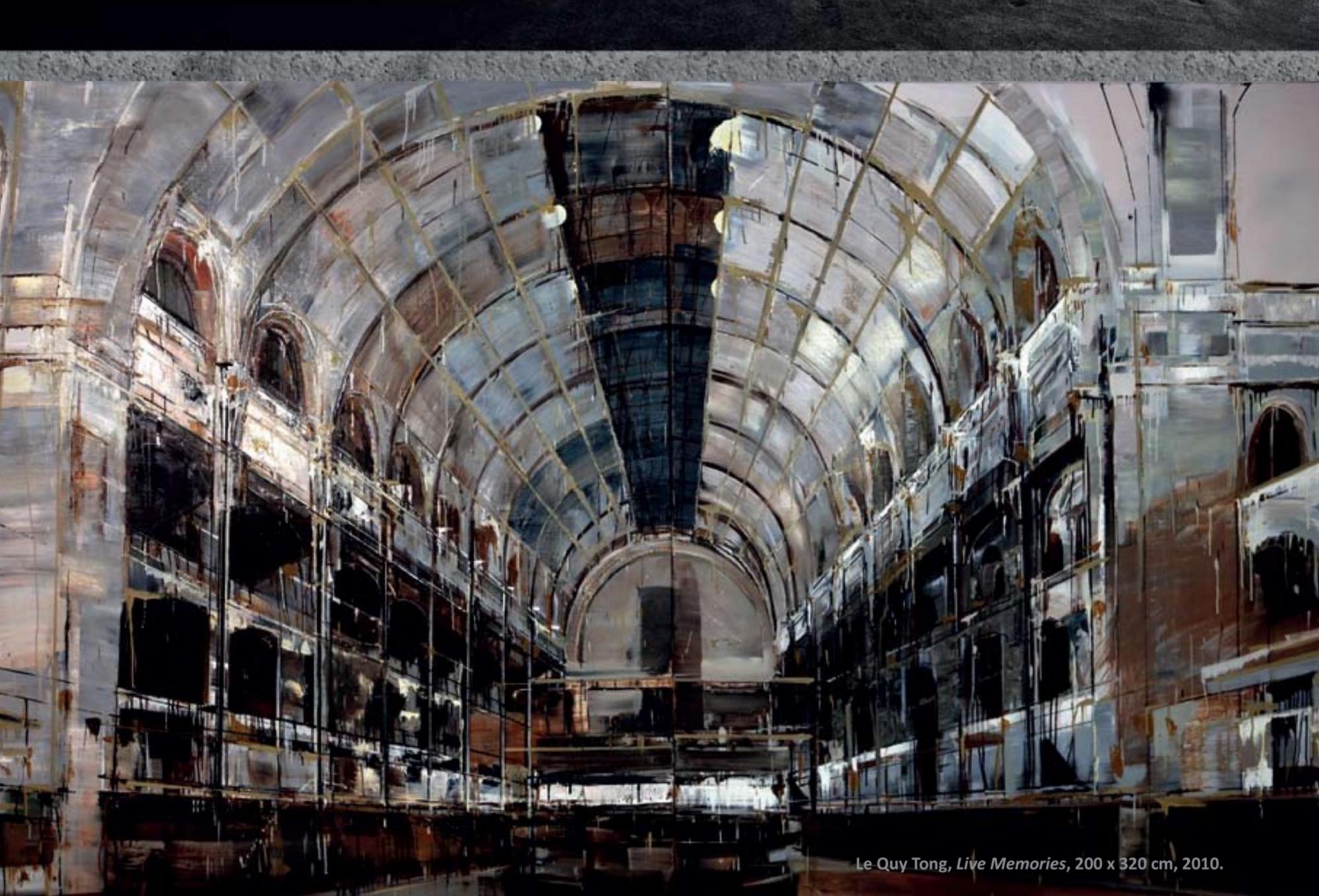
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#### **Exhibitions/USA**

Luke Fowler, Anthology Film Archives, New York, and CCS Bard, Annandale-on-Hudson Michael Krebber, Greene Naftali Gallery, New York, and Real Fine Arts, New York Uta Barth, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York Marina Pinsky, Workspace, Los Angeles Nathan Hylden, Richard Telles Fine Art, Los Angeles Heather Rowe, D'Amelio Terras, New York

#### **Exhibitions/Europe & Rest of the World**

Rita Donagh and Richard Hamilton, Hugh Lane, Dublin
Alessandro Pessoli, Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia
Spaceship Yugoslavia: The Suspension of Time, NGBK Berlin
Sonia Kacem, Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zurich
Arnulf Rainer / Victor Hugo, Maison de Victor Hugo, Paris
Museum of Desires, MUMOK, Vienna
Taryn Simon, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin
3 Countries 3 Artists, Hadrien de Montferrand, Beijing

#### On the Town

Phillips de Pury & Company Shop, London

Robert Mapplethorpe Curated by Sofia Coppola,

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris

#### **Books**

Matthew Brannon: Hyenas Are..., by Jan Tumlir
Bye Bye Babylon: Beirut 1975–1979, by Lamia Ziadé
The Speech Writer, by Bani Abidi
A New Art from Emerging Markets, by Iain Robertson
Oceanomania: Souvenirs of Mysterious Seas from the
Expedition to the Aquarium, by Mark Dion
Critical Dictionary, edited by David Evans
Design Research Unit 1942–72, by Michelle Cotton
Blind, by Sophie Calle
Under Blue Cup, by Rosalind E. Krauss

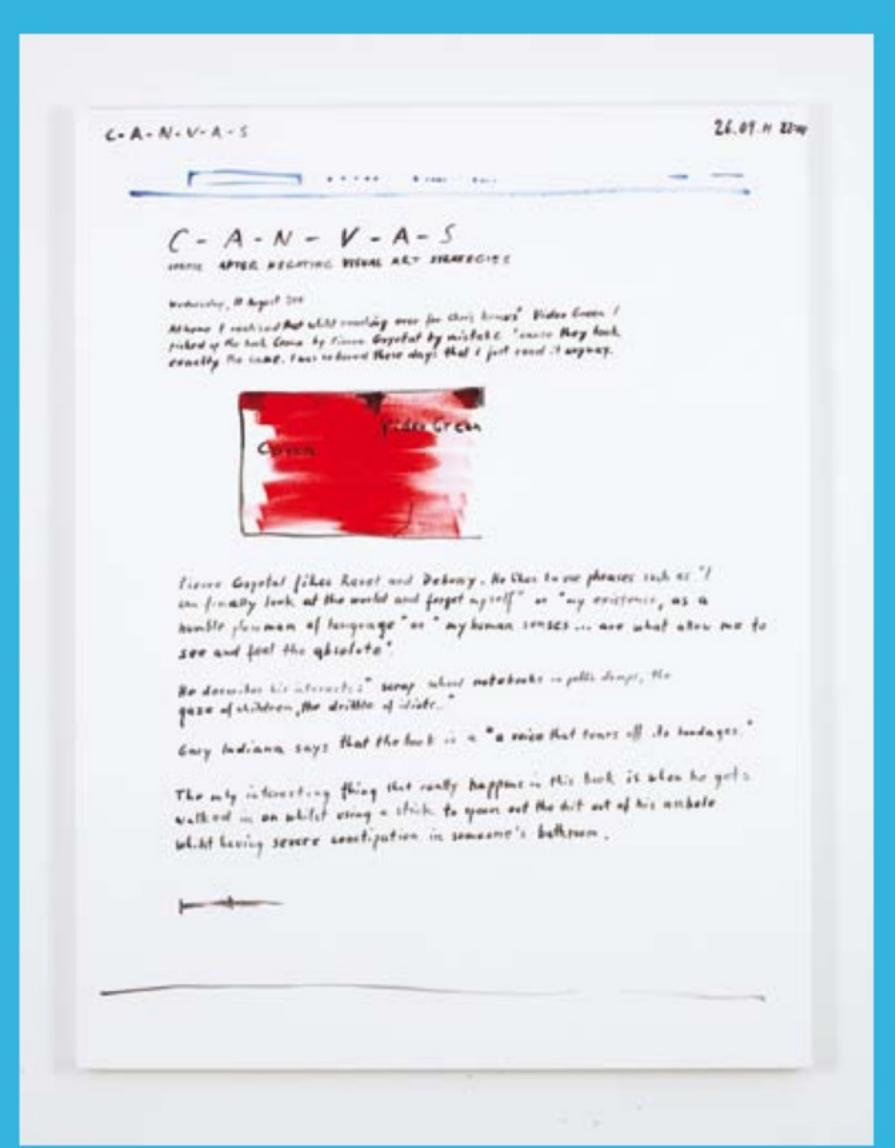
#### Off the Record

The artworld makes Gallery Girl sick



Luke Fowler

All Divided Selves, 2011, still



Michael Krebber
C-A-N-V-A-S Painting 7, 2011,
acrylic on linen, 140 x 107 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Greene
Naftali, New York



Luke Fowler: All Divided Selves Anthology Film Archives, New York 3 November

CCS Bard, Annandale-on-Hudson 9 November - 16 December

In his longest and most complex film to date, Luke Fowler returns to the life and thought of R.D. Laing (1927-1989), the visionary Glaswegian psychiatrist whose belief that mental illness was caused less by individual psychoses than social alienation and interfamilial trauma challenged the dogmas of contemporary psychiatry, and whose interest in associative thinking and empathetic, redemptive therapy informs the shape and content of Fowler's work. From What You See Is Where You're At, his 2001 study of Kingsley Hall, a Laingian residence facility at which psychotic reactions were treated as valid lived experiences, to Bogman Palmjaguar (2008), a meditation on one man's failing efforts to quash a diagnosis of mental illness, Fowler has probed the tension between society and the 'misfit', querying the ethics behind the marginalisation effected by so-called progressive Western societies on the economically, socially and mentally disadvantaged.

These tensions are again the crux of All Divided Selves. Here, as in his other films, loops through archival footage culled from documentaries and interviews present a collagelike portrait - a structure reflecting Laing's belief that the disturbed were in fact "hypersane" travelers conducting an inner voyage through aeonic time' - of a postwar Britain debilitated by urban rot, economic exigency and sexual puritanism. That these pressures spawned a plague of depression and schizophrenia, and a consequent reliance on mind-numbing drugs clinical and recreational - seems obvious and tragic. As the latter failed to address the roots of both the psychic and social discontent, the growing sense of societal chaos made repressive power seem justified.

But despite graphic footage of fetid tenements and scenes of psychiatrists callously hectoring their spiritually bruised patients, Fowler tags no one as wholly good or evil. Rather, he implies, especially given the work's title, that all people are haunted by self-destructive tendencies and feelings of social inadequacy. The exemplar here is Laing himself, whose bouts of mental illness and, as he aged, predilection for drugs and the composition of offbeat ditties clouded his earlier eloquence and rendered his ideas suspect.

If the counterculture figures and unstable individuals in Fowler's earlier films have often seemed a world apart, All Divided Selves strongly implicates its viewers as both agents and objects of the judgements and pressures that underlie such marginalisation. Several scenes of squalid windowsills and kitchens in treatment facilities, for example, force us to confront our natural propensity for disgust while also evoking the oppressive reality of deprivation. In analysing such emotional dichotomies, and in following the film's looping structure, viewers become like the medical students who, in several clips, listen as psychiatrists interview patients. Asked to respond to what they have heard, these interns seem torn between the detached conclusions of the attendant experts and the empathy they clearly feel for the desperately needy. If we choose judgement over empathy, Fowler implies, we marginalise aspects of ourselves in favour of social conformity we cannot control.

#### **JOSHUA MACK**



Michael Krebber: C-A-N-V-A-S, Uhutrust, Jerry Magoo and guardian.co.uk Painting Greene Naftali Gallery, New York 20 October – 19 November

Michael Krebber: *Here Comes the Sons* Real Fine Arts, New York 22 October - 20 November

Michael Krebber's two concurrent New York solo exhibitions are both luminous. Greene Naftali in particular is almost blindingly white. There are the walls, of course, and then there are the canvases, mostly black acrylic text surrounded by white linen, which seem to float off the walls. These very painterly works are somewhat ironic considering Krebber's practice, which could be paradoxically defined as resuscitating painting only to artfully 'end' it. Among past conceptual

jabs, he's painted white triangles over storebought animal-print fabric, overlaid transcribed lectures on comic-book screenprints and presented an installation of ephemera in the back office of an otherwise empty gallery space.

Krebber was for a time an assistant to Martin Kippenberger, who once claimed that painting was a product of everything around it, from the floor to the wall to the spaghettini. Critic David Joselit completed Kippenberger's thought when he asked, 'How does painting belong to a network?' C-A-N-V-A-S, Uhutrust, Jerry Magoo, and guardian.co.uk truly counts the ways, appropriating the content of four Internet art blogs, each with hundreds, if not thousands, of readers. A negative review of a Mark Leckey exhibition by Guardian blogger Jonathan Jones garnered 308 comments, and provides the subject matter for several works here. Painting them with a casual hand, Krebber flattens each web page. Ads and images become simple signifiers and Albert Oehlen-like colour blobs, while text is written in cursive, hovering on the line of legibility. Two canvases are blank monochromes, because the controversial blog posts on which they were based (written by Krebber's colleague Michaela Eichwald in *Uhutrust*) were later deleted. Others display snappy artworld shit-talking by C-A-N-V-A-S and Jerry Magoo, both written anonymously, and both in part by some of Krebber's former students at the Staedelschule, in Frankfurt.

If this all sounds very insidery, Here Comes the Sons makes it explicitly so. The two young directors of Real Fine Arts invited him, as a kind of Oedipal conceit, to show some work: Krebber as father figure, and they as his 'sons'. This also dovetails with the George Harrison-composed Beatles song recalled in the exhibition's title and the fraught disciple-mentor relationship between Harrison and John Lennon. How all of this fawning meshes with the ostensible subject matter of the works - different iterations of a Kate Middleton snail painting, as captured in press reports of the Duchess of Cambridge's visit to an LA art charity - is beyond me. But as with C-A-N-V-A-S, Uhutrust, Jerry Magoo, and guardian.co.uk, the paintings are of secondary concern to the many people involved in their production and circulation; and in this specific instance, they are essentially a pedagogical exercise. The press materials, written by Michael Sanchez, spell this out with loaded phrases such as 'networked painting' and 'parasitizing the negative' laid out in gaps and stutters across the page. Sanchez, we learn, was gifted Here Comes the Sons 6 (2011) for his efforts, and it's displayed, packed in its Greene Naftali wrapping, at Real Fine Arts, making refreshingly legible the terms of the transaction.

#### DAVID EVERITT HOWE



**Uta Barth** Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York 27 October - 22 December

Piet Mondrian, whose geometric Compositions paintings clearly haunt Uta Barth's photographic Compositions of Light on White series (all works 2011), designed his frames so that the paintings would not be recessed like the transparent glass pane of a metaphorical window onto another world. Instead the paintings project forward, like the opaque surfaces of some object, challenging the norms of pictorial art. Unlike Mondrian's works, Barth's Compositions are recessed - or 'locked down', as she puts it - in floating frames. The shadow that appears in the inch-wide gap between the photograph and the painted wood frame isolates the image as an object within the space of the gallery, but the surface of a photograph is not a worked-upon material thing like a painted canvas; it's an unmodulated, taut, glassy skin. Barth's photographic object, contra Mondrian, is also always a mimetic image.

Barth does not repeat this presentation strategy for the other series in this exhibition, ... and to draw a bright white line with light. In both bodies of work she repeatedly photographs an isolated section of her own domestic space, but the latter series is presented in a sequence rather than as individual compositions.

If Barth's Compositions of Light on White immediately recalls the geometric structure of modernist abstraction, then ... and to draw a bright white line with light uncannily mimes the appearance of the painted surface. In this linearly arranged series, Barth photographs over the course of an afternoon the same bright curtained window, on which, as the title informs us, a bright white line gradually expands. Barth's own apartment window serves as a playful literalisation of the metaphor that Mondrian was so keen to negate. But are we not also encouraged to refer back to the mythography of mimetic representation in the classical story of the painters Zeuxis and Parrhasius? (One fooled the birds that tried to peck at his painting of grapes, while the other fooled the man, his fellow painter, who reached out to draw back the painted curtain.)

From a distance this series shows a temporal unfolding, a highly aestheticised form of documentation of the sun's onward progress over the course of the day. Like a literal English translation of the Greek-derived word 'photography', Barth gives us a visualisation of 'writing with light'. But up close the pixelated fug of the digital process, combined with Barth's selection of the most matt of all matt paper, gives the work the distinct appearance of being a painted copy of a photographic original. These images have a very shallow depth of field because of the technical restrictions involved in photographing into the light; the undulating, coarsely woven curtain shifts in and out of focus, further intensifying the painterly effect.

Without the visual bombast of her tableaustyle contemporaries (eg, Jeff Wall or Andreas Gursky), Barth's play on the structure of painting is achieved by recourse to photography's most essential elements: time, space, light and surface. Looking at this work means entering into a state of ambiguity. Shuttling between differing pictorial traditions, we remain uncertain of what we perceive.

#### SIONA WILSON

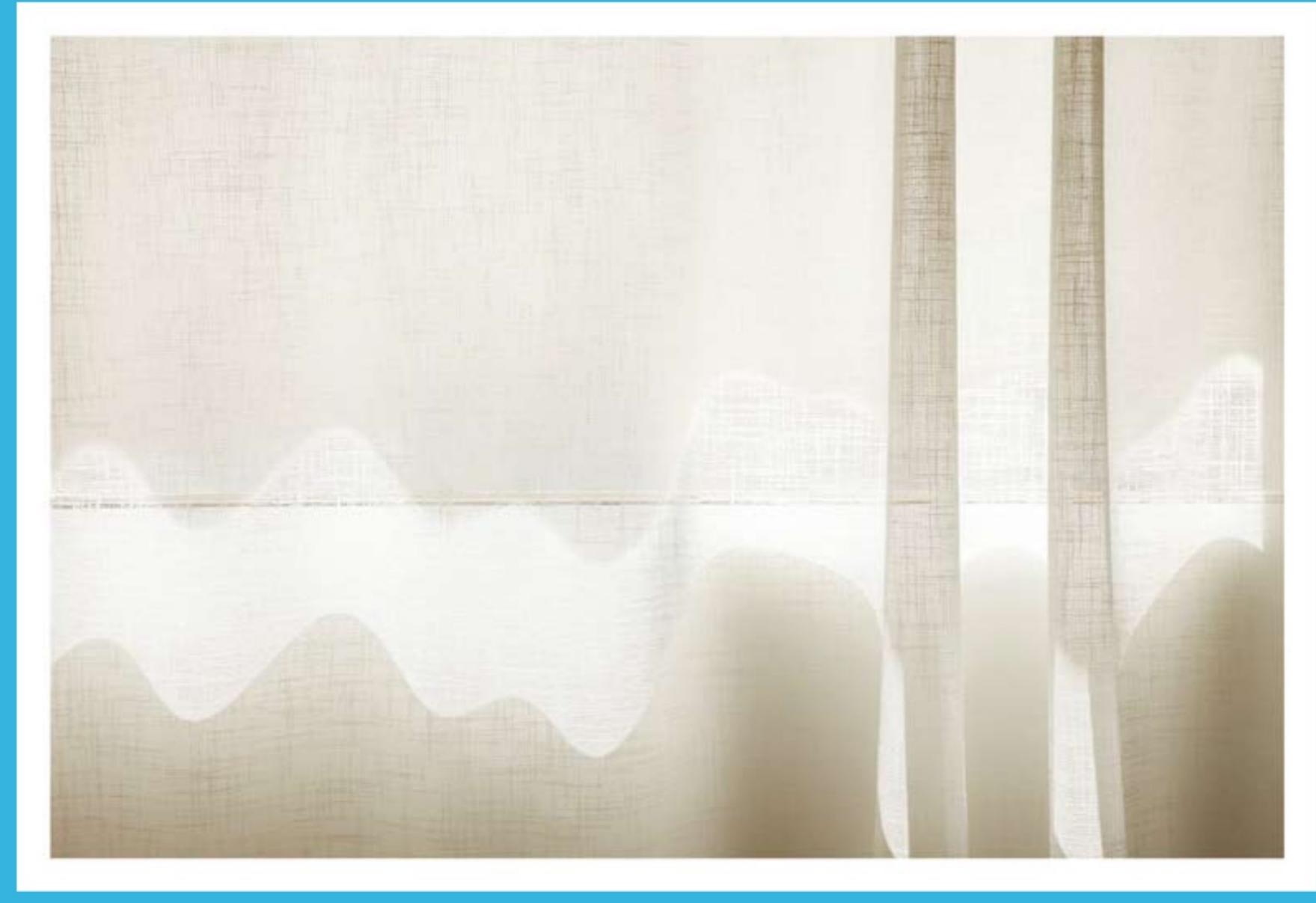


Marina Pinsky: Department of Water and Power Workspace, Los Angeles 5 November - 4 December

The Tate Gallery got into a brickload of trouble ANDREW BERARDINI when it snapped up a stack of bricks by Carl Andre in 1972. Critics always disagree, of course, but one might say Andre was attempting to make art out of the physical language of his time, the industrial materials being shat out of factories with nary a human hand to ruin their 'harmony, proportion and pure order' (to use the language of the defence). But industrial materials (cinder block, brick, rebar) as found in the photographs of artist Marina Pinsky aren't any quasi-mystic celebration of the purity of industrial form; rather, they're objects adulterated by a displaced nostalgia, a constructed emotional memory.

Pinsky's photographed accumulations are oddly familiar and nearly familial. Cinder blocks stuck with rebar fraternise with weathered bricks. Lightbulbs both swirly fluorescent and bulbously incandescent dangle and stand, lit and unlit, arranged just so. These things and their scene are speckled with photographs, both coloured glossy snaps and what look like black-and-white magazine clippings. The snaps and ephemera get tacked behind lightbulbs, while historic photos of chess matches and busy factories are slipped in next to the stones. Pinsky slips some organic commodities into the mix as well: a few apples, a sweaty jar or two of grains, a couple of slices of bread standing stiffly by what appears to be a concrete mould for sliced bread. The flatness of the picture plane (which all photographs of course lend to reality) makes even the food look more like bricks than something you might actually eat. The angles and industry recall Russian Constructivism more than American Minimalism, but the former's celebration of modernity had an explicit social purpose. Born in Russia and reared in the US, Pinsky has memories of the motherland that are mostly secondhand: all the celebrated industry of Russian factories and collective farms feels very far away but still oddly dear.

Bizarrely resembling family portraits in their arrangements, the objects have about them the familiarity of fabricated memory; it's almost as if these poor and simple things were invested with the spectral, a homesickness for a home the artist can't remember. But rather than giving off the warmth of a family snapshot, Pinsky's pictures appear like the stiff and formal groupings from a professional portrait studio; they contain a unity, but a coldness, too. The nostalgia is after all a constructed one. This coldness and distance is emphasised by a sculptural intervention, a stack of bricks that blocks out the gallery's front window. It closes off the space and makes the sculpture just another wall work, an opportunity missed to add an uncomfortable third dimension. Andre's industrial purity feels thankfully tainted here with some sense of humanity. But I can't help wishing for more: that the apples were smashed, the grain spilled, the bread rotting. Standing in front of the blockade of the brick wall, I want to knock it down.





#### Uta Barth

... and to draw a bright
white line with light
(Untitled 11.3), 2011, inkjet print
face-mounted against matt acrylic,
framed in painted aluminium frame,
96 x 142 cm (framed), edition of
6 + 2AP. Courtesy the artist and
Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York

Marina Pinsky
Untitled, 2011, inkjet print, edition of 5, 61 x 81 cm. © and courtesy the artist



Nathan Hylden: So There's That Richard Telles Fine Art, Los Angeles 22 October - 3 December

There's a paradox at the heart of Nathan Hylden's paintings. In terms of materials, purpose and content, they are the definition of boring. They show layers of deadpan imagery, stencilled shapes and paint, and often take their cue from the most overplayed source in contemporary art: the banal moments of the studio. The walls, the floors, the slow passages of waiting for something to happen - these can be crushing for artists and downright tedious for viewers.

Parts of paintings make other paintings, and so it goes, on and on, without end. It's the kind of work that brings forth hardly-inspiring descriptions from writers. Bob Nickas, in his 2009 book Painting Abstraction, says that Hylden's paintings are 'art in the age of handmade mechanical reproduction'. Sober indeed.

The paradox arises, however, in Hylden's facility for making such proceedings interesting against impossible odds. Getting to know Hylden's work has much in common with getting to know Robert Ryman's paintings: the pleasure of noting subtle differences of decision-making across series of works - an edge of aluminium gets fatter, a surface takes a new texture due to the direction of paint, a shadow that wasn't there in one work suddenly appears and grows larger in the next.

Hylden's show at Richard Telles is divided in two. The main space contains two very large paintings that, because of the installation, occupy what amounts to a hallway. The primary distinction between the two works, both magnified depictions of a wall's surface, is that a screw has been removed from one of them, leaving just the hole in which it had presumably once been inserted. The absence of that screw throws a shimmer of differences across the paintings that forever binds them: in isolation they would be unremarkable if not straight out bad, but the union of the two makes for a festival of factfinding as the eye pores over their surfaces.

These two paintings pale in comparison paintings hang as a panorama around the room. Rowe's work exhibits a fine craftsman's attention

Straightforward aluminium panels have been spraypainted as a group and then printed with a shadowy image. In this room, small differences between the works magnify and compress the viewing experience in a rich and human way one would not expect. Similar to Warhol's Shadows (1978-9), these works were created using repetition and machine directives, yet they remain somehow loose enough to be interesting. Strangely, surprisingly, the works become likeable - the ennui lifts. It's like finding an interesting conversation in a hospital waiting room.

Hylden's work has almost too much in common with other hot painters today. R.H. Quaytman, Tauba Auerbach, Michael Krebber, Wade Guyton and Christopher Wool are all elephants in the room, but in this world of pale dead colours, industrial materials, flat printing techniques, distant cold surfaces and systemically depressed deployments, Hylden has a strong, engaged voice that can be rewarding if enough time is spent with it. There is a sense of patience in his work, a detailing that resists the dangers of his quotidian pursuits. He is in a group of contemporary painters intent on simply going forward, deploying old techniques, just 'carrying on', while reserving that often tedious right to see painting as a dubious enterprise. However, in the end, Hylden is fascinating in spite of it; you can feel he is not quite onboard with such views.

**ED SCHAD** 



**Heather Rowe** D'Amelio Terras, New York 19 November - 23 December

**Much of** Heather Rowe's work to date has been discussed in terms of its implicit violence. She cuts up drywall, plywood, mirrors, particleboard, glass, carpet - all the trappings of American-type domestic construction - and puts the many crosssectioned ends and innards on display in elaborate and complex installations for all to see. It's a denuding, or better, a flaying or scalping of the architectural enclosure. The process is far from merely destructive, however; it's just the opposite, in fact. Picking up from certain Russian to those found in the second gallery, where eight constructivist and American minimalist forebears,

to the details of joint and pin. Screwheads, if you see them, are meant to be seen exactly where they are. Bits of thread or a jagged edge are - as they say - lovingly set in place.

These are nevertheless profane acts, like the nighttime compulsions of a serial killer who cuts up and exsanguinates his victims in order to arrange their remains just so - only here the killer is a historical preservationist.

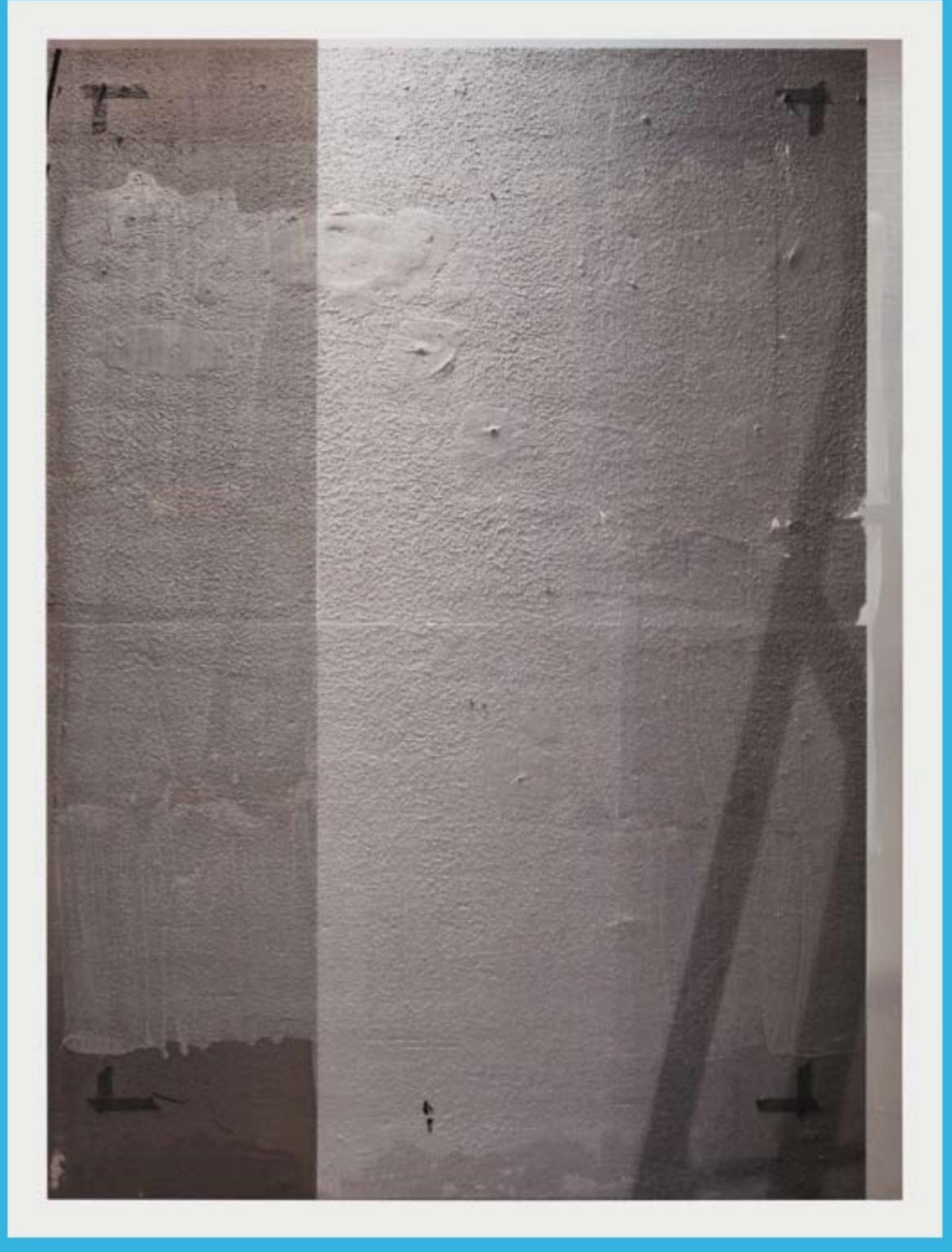
My point is that behind the architectural cuts and constructions, which have a tendency to lead their viewers into mise-en-scène-type traps where all one can or wants to speak about -drily, as it were - is the staging and the experience of one's body in the space inside or around the installation, there stands no uncertain amount of kink. It's not the kink of architectural exhibitionism, though; it's more like Rowe is a connoisseur of some underground construction club where good building goes to get tied up and contorted in search of some ecstatic release that is otherwise unavailable to it in the workaday world.

Paneled Insomnia (all works 2011) offers a good example of this. Its white sawtooth panels project forward from an antique mirror frame that appears barely capable of restraining them. On first approach it looks as if it takes its cue from one of Robert Smithson's Enantiomorphic Chambers (1965), but get closer and the piece begins to invite you, or at least your gaze, in for a peek. Behind the panels, within the construction, up close and rather immodestly, you find strips of faux fur - not exactly a conventional construction material, but then again, these are no conventional constructions.

This erotics of hide and reveal reaches a climax in Discontinued Wall, a subtly pimpled white wallpaper that covers one wall of the gallery; it's easily missed, not least because the wallpaper's diamond pattern of raised microdots dissolves into a haze that is indistinguishable from the white of the other walls when only a few steps away. Yet you still glimpse it, like a bit of lace slip that falls briefly below a hemline. You have to battle the urge to draw a finger across its pristine surface.

In general Rowe's wallworks are smaller, tighter exercises that demonstrate the artist's abiding interest in the way that built structures carry mnemonic loads, but these latest pieces are opening up new psychological dimensions, and becoming a little less chaste.

#### JONATHAN T.D. NEIL



# Nathan Hylden Untitled, 2011, acrylic on aluminium, 197 x 144 cm. Photo: Fredrik Nilsen. Courtesy Richard Telles Fine Art, Los Angeles

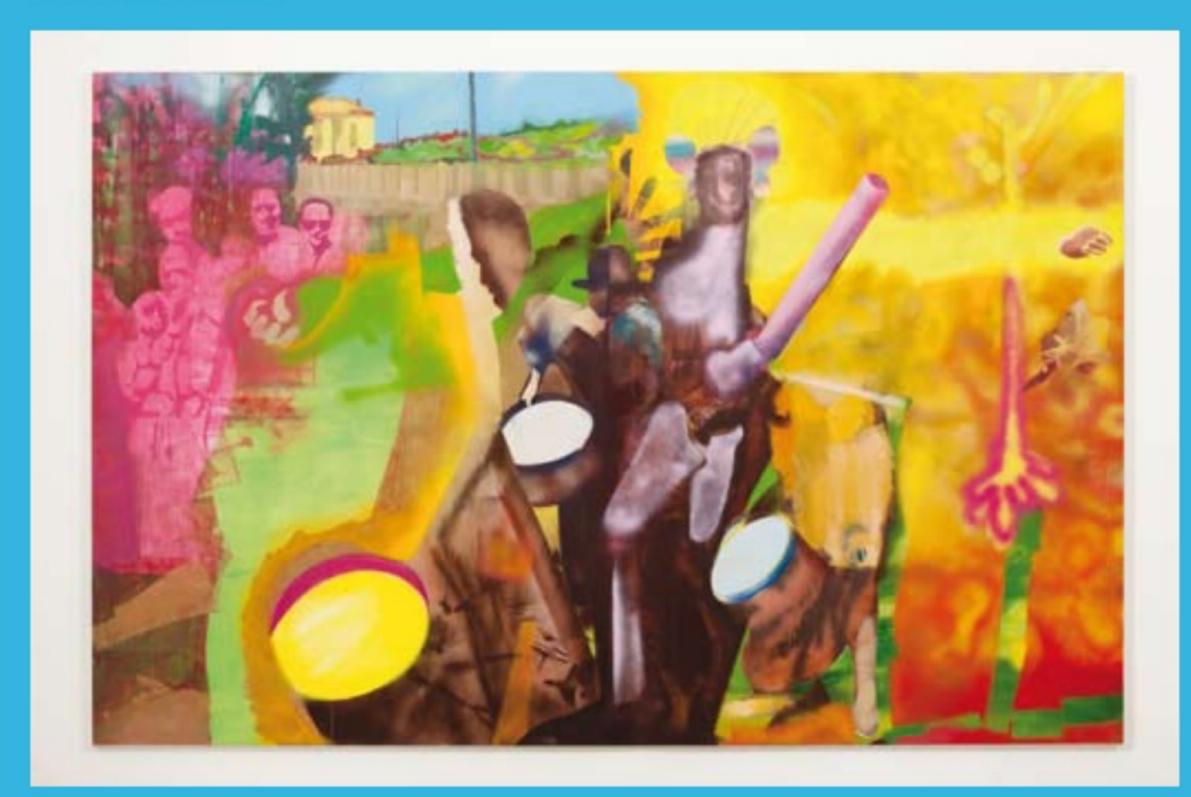
# Heather Rowe Carmine Mirror (for the Little House), 2011, wood, wallpaper, mirror, frames, 66 x 71 x 18 cm. Photo: Jason Mandella. Courtesy the artist and D'Amelio Terras, New York





**Rita Donagh and Richard Hamilton** *Civil Rights etc.*, 2011 (installation view).
Photo: Eugene Langan

# Alessandro Pessoli Testa Farfalla su Matrice Locomotiva, 2011, oil, enamel, spraypaint on canvas, 195 x 300 cm. Photo: Fredrik Nilsen. © the artist



# RITANACIA PON RICHARITO

Rita Donagh and Richard Hamilton: Civil Rights etc. Hugh Lane, Dublin 5 September - 15 January

Proof that art and politics have not always made strange bedfellows is this recent exhibition of the highly charged work of veteran rabble-rousers Rita Donagh and Richard Hamilton. A mostly standard-issue two-artist turn - the show's overwhelming rationale is derived from their having been married - Civil Rights etc. suffers from the bijoux-box display this frumpy Irish institution usually bestows on its exhibition fare. Still, there is some instruction here, primarily of the dos and don'ts variety. As a museum outing, the show contains a smattering of yesterday's lessons for today's contemporary artists especially for that savvy, responsible bunch examining the increasingly urgent connections to be made between art and society.

The late Hamilton - he passed away at age eighty-nine, just a week after Civil Rights opened - was the progenitor of a brand of Pop art whose hipster and internationalist bona fides once seemed as inseparable as fish and water. In what was practically the first definition of a global cultural event that American artists later successfully merchandised, Hamilton initially defined Pop as an activity that was 'popular, transient, expendable, low-cost, mass-produced, young, witty, sexy, gimmicky, glamorous, and Big Business'. Fifty-five years after the appearance of his iconic collage, Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing? (created for the pioneering 1956 Whitechapel Gallery show This Is Tomorrow), Hamilton's early-twenty-first century artistic production still sports rows of serrated partisan teeth.

More politically committed and less 'big business' than a pair of installed 1972 screenprints that riff on *Swingeing London*, newer Hamilton

works presented at the Hugh Lane - which include Treatment Room, a 1983-4 hospital-room installation featuring a Big Brother-ish Maggie Thatcher on the TV and a large 2007-8 canvas print of Tony Blair as Wyatt Earp, titled Shock and Awe - strike an activist vein that comes across with Madison Avenue-like directness. Donagh, Hamilton's partner for some 40 years, on the other hand - given the exhibition's retrospective evidence - has remained wedded to a more circuitous, process-oriented artistic ramble. Comparisons between their twin approaches are as unwanted as they are inevitable today. Bad tidings aside, it's impossible not to consider Donagh the junior partner- on the merits of this show, anyway.

Throughout a career equally devoted to reflecting on what Hamilton termed their 'political and moral motivations', Donagh has tried to balance, primarily through paintings and drawings, a commitment to a radical set of political ideals with a delicate brand of aesthetic, often arty refinement. Take the artist's interest in charting, mapping and cartography, for instance. Not only does it sometimes prove frustratingly difficult to unearth Donagh's content from beneath her repetitive grids and feints towards minimalist abstraction, but the schematics of works like Reflection on Three Weeks in May 1970 (1971; putatively about the Kent State shootings) and the 1984 painting Lough Neagh (which depicts a landscape overrun by flying Hs, symbolising, according to the catalogue, the H-Block prisons that once housed members of the Provisional IRA) often muddle the commonplace humanist values that inspired them - at times beyond recognition.

Though both artists drew from many of the same sources in the mass media - cue the march of newspaper and magazine photographs and documentary TV footage - Hamilton's mixedmedia and digital collages and Donagh's more conventional artworld efforts part company when one considers how efficiently they communicate the trenchant complexities of their chosen content. Whereas Hamilton's approach, at its best, produced inversions of key historical massproduced images and their processes, Donagh's work is too often mired in the procedural demands of her conceptualist generation. The difference is like that existing between criticism and criticality: one is simply a method of questioning, the other is a style.

#### **CHRISTIAN VIVEROS-FAUNE**



Alessandro Pessoli: *Fiamma Pilota le Ombre Seguono*Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia
30 October - 29 January

Before visiting Alessandro Pessoli's solo show in Reggio Emilia, I went to the Basilica della Ghiara, to see Guercino's famed Crucifixion altarpiece (1624-5); then I moved on to the cathedral, to see another picture-perfect Crucifixion, by Guido Reni, from 1636. In Italy churches are free museums, and being exposed to Catholic iconography is as commonplace as watching TV. Certain images, together with their codes and signifiers, inscribe themselves in memory, feeling both familiar and haunting: an effect Pasolini played on with his filmic tableaux vivants after Rosso Fiorentino or Pontormo. And so there it was, a Christus patiens (suffering Christ), with the same head as Reni's, in Fiamma Pilota (Pilot Light; all works 2011), the work after which Pessoli's exhibition is titled. In his accompanying statement, the Cervia-born artist mentions Grünewald's Crucifixion as another antecedent. Religious imagery, though, for Pessoli, is not only a subject matter but a litmus test for the vitality of all 'icons', even the potentially exhausted or unfashionable.

His working method, based on layering and blurring the images, fracturing them and reworking them while leaving all his pentimenti visible, here translates into a mixed use of oil paint, enamel, spraypaint and stencils, which makes the transitions from one area of the painting to another more dramatic than usual, though given the fact that spraypaint allows for

extremely fine layers of paint, also more subtle. The exhibition layout is simple: one room, a large new painting on each wall. Fiamma Pilota (a metaphor for its role in 'igniting' the whole cycle) stands out for its colours - luminous pink for the flesh, crisp blue and green for the background and side characters, evoking the atmospheres of Der Blaue Reiter - as well as for its compositional clarity, where the central Christ figure detaches itself from the rest, almost as a cutout, and with no attempt to hide the shift from one pictorial plane to the other. In Le Figure Tornano a Casa (The Figures Return Home) the palette is dark, the shades nocturnal, the background golden as in Byzantine mosaics: a black figure outstretches his arms like a negative of the Crucifixion, while another rides a donkey - it could be Christ entering Jerusalem; it could be Sancho Panza.

Testa Farfalla su Matrice Locomotiva (Butterfly Head on Locomotive Matrix) occupies the mediating position: there is a central 'knot' of dark figures, dynamically intertwined like in futurist paintings, and large areas of pink, yellow and green almost erasing the surrounding landscape. After moving to Los Angeles a few years ago, Pessoli adopted a brighter palette, while letting a set of 'memorable' images or reference points rooted in his personal history and/or autobiography resurface like shades or recollections. The cinema of Fellini (who was born in Rimini, a few miles away from Cervia), for instance: while Pessoli's recent show in Brussels was titled after Juliet of the Spirits (1965), the scene in the left corner of Testa Farfalla... comes from La Strada (1954). One could say Pessoli likes to carry the world of images on his shoulders. In his book Confronting Images (2009), Georges Didi-Huberman analyses the lesson of art historian Aby Warburg, who believed in the powers to haunt that inhere in all images and advocated for a different visual semiology:

Something like a suspended attention, a prolonged suspension of the moment of reaching conclusions, where interpretation would have time to deploy itself in several dimensions, between the grasped visible and the lived ordeal of a relinquishment. There would also be, in this alternative, a dialectical moment consisting of not-grasping the image, of letting oneself be grasped by it instead: thus of letting go of one's knowledge about it. The risks are great, of course. The beautiful risks of fiction.

I think Pessoli would agree.

#### **BARBARA CASAVECCHIA**

# SPACES!INIA SPACES!INIA

Spaceship Yugoslavia: The Suspension of Time NGBK Berlin 24 September - 30 October

If the former Yugoslavia must be compared to a spacecraft, clearly it suffered a major malfunction. True Titoists might have thought it as streamlined as the Starship *Enterprise*, but in reality it was a jerry-built construction with unsealed bits that fell to earth, causing burn-up and disintegration. This show, featuring work by over 20 exiled artists who used the escape hatch and now stare at the wreckage, is a forensic examination of the fragments, or individual countries. The glory days of the once-unified socialist state are also revisited with an unsentimental gaze, not one we associate with the cloying manner of kitsch *ostalgie*.

A banner outside NGBK informs passing Kreuzbergers that there are 'No more Yugoslavs': the Sarajevan Damir Radović's protest art about territorial claims continues inside, where he has installed his own tent (Shoelaces Are Undone, 2011). He is staying in this for the duration of the show, a poignant gesture of exile that politely requests belonging. Phil Collins's video How to Make a Refugee (1999), shown on the opposite wall, is an early warning here against pat generalisations. Collins exposes the emotionally manipulative tricks of the media, as two Kosovar kids have sad aspects of their story heightened in a manner not distant from the comedic distortions of Chris Morris. Elsewhere the Slovene band Laibach, part of the Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK) collective, airs its own ambiguous use of totalitarian chic in three videos.

More Kosovar moppets pop up in *Tonys* (2010), an image appropriated by Alban Muja. Here nine young lads stand smiling in a line, arms around each other. Wearing suits and ties, like

minidiplomats in waiting, the boys are all called Tonibler – behind them is a blown-up image of the ex-prime minister and advocate of NATO intervention after whom they are all named. In Kosovo newborns are traditionally named after dead ancestors, but these boys stand for a newly forged republic and are thus, confusingly for British eyes, identified with the man they regard as a hero but who led us into the quagmire of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Vahida Ramujkić's Disputed Histories (2011), an installation resembling a schoolroom, is a variant on workshops that have been held in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. These feature discussions around an archive of history textbooks that might lead to revised 'truths' for a 'neo-Yugoslavia'. (Miško Suvaković, professor of art theory in Belgrade, has posited this concept, with artists and intellectuals as the basis for a potential political future.) The work recalls Bosnian-American writer Aleksandar Hemon's short story 'The Life and Work of Alphonse Kauders' (1995), where we learn about the putative Encyclopaedia of Yugoslavia, which 'was never even close to being entirely published, because of the many conflicting histories involved, so there really isn't any encyclopaedic Yugoslavia, which by a snide turn of history couldn't matter less, since Yugoslavia is not much of a country any more'.

Marko Krojač is exercised by another archive-the 20,000 or so monumental sculptures to commemorate the victory against Nazism. His photographic collection Heritage of the Yugoslav Revolution: Artefacts Between Memory and Neglect (2005-11) records many that have been deliberately damaged because of their association with the former Communist ideology. Bojan Fajfrić's video Theta Rhythm (2010), meanwhile, features the artist playing his politician father snoozing at a Central Committee of the Communist League of Serbia in 1987. His dad was asleep at the wheel back then, while the selfimmolating future module commander Slobodan Milošević contemplated how to set the controls for the heart of the sun. Here, then, in the context of a show aimed at stimulating discussion around the idea(s) of its titular country, is a group of artists trying to make sense of ex-, post-, and non-Yugoslavia. See them as astronauts in training most stationed in Berlin, their new Baikonur. As for the concept of a Neo-Yugoslavia: is it worth another try? Maybe they should let it be. Can it be rebuilt? And even if it could, would it fly?

#### **JOHN QUIN**



Sonia Kacem: *PROGRESS MI 07* Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zurich 29 October – 23 December

Roland Barthes's concept of 'the neutral' is the lens through which, according to the handout, we should view the modest objects that Sonia Kacem has gathered and arranged here. Barthes's term emerged in an eponymous seminar that he gave at the Collège de France in the late 1970s. That is not to say that he defined it; the neutral, he said, is a paradoxical accumulation of elements that succeeds when it 'baffles the paradigm'. Baffles, not opposes - it's a game of nuance, an attempt to escape the strictures of methodology. In doing this, Barthes reflected upon how to create a university course; and an artist wishing to avoid the artworld's pack mentality could, if nothing else, try applying this as a guide to a singular path (if, ironically, one to which several artists have turned of late). Of course what the reference also does, with its implicit rejection of categorisation, is to strike dumb and damn the critic employed to define, decline and pass judgement on the elements of an exhibition.

To view Kacem's quotation of Barthes charitably, she is trying to respond to his call to arms: his request for active creation and delicate sensitivity to the specificity of a given space and time. But what does she offer us? In the main space, the contents of a vacuum cleaner bag have been strewn on the floor; the bag was a model named PROGRESS MI 07, after which the work (all works 2011) and the show are named. On this carpet lie part of an old car bumper, a large crumpled scroll of white paper entwined with a pale pinkish lining fabric and various small wooden or metal fragments. To one side, leaning against the wall, is Drapé 1, Stick 1, Stick 2, made from pieces of faded awning material: one element is half-unfurled, its lower section made rigid by resin; the other two are tightly rolled and arranged across it. In the adjoining office, a further used fabric shade has been repurposed as Banderole, suspended from two fixings high on the wall.

Phil Collins
How to Make a Refugee, 1999,
video still

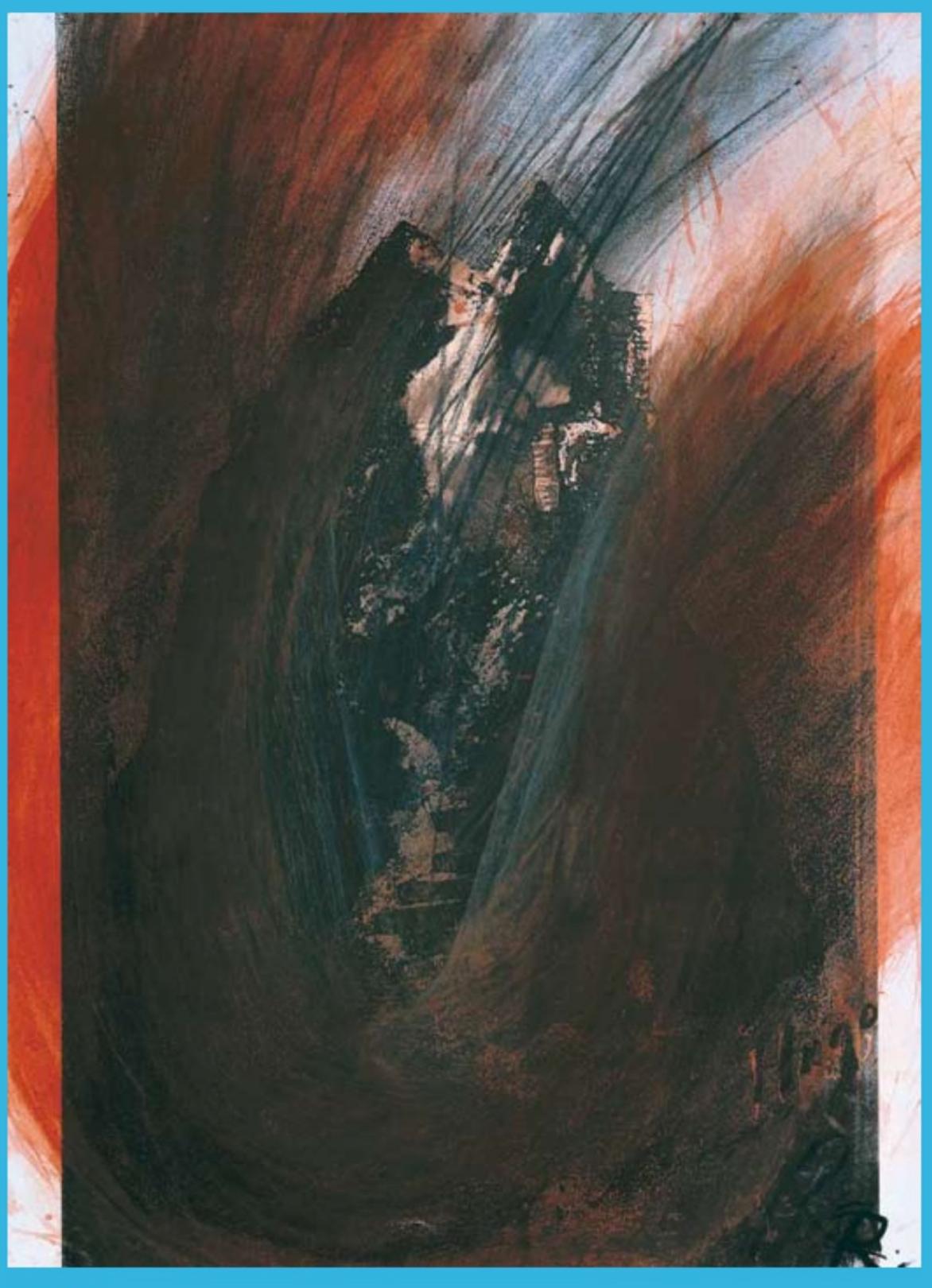


Robert Morris's 1969 Continuous Project Altered Daily is said to be another cornerstone of Kacem's research; his work and PROGRESS MI 07 have the use of dust and detritus in common, but this is a definite red herring. Not only is Kacem's piece installed once and for all, but unlike Morris's deliberate 'anti-form', her presentation is alive to the sculptural and indeed poetic possibilities her materials offer. Her 'antimaterials' have become a stage set for a classical drama. The yellowish dust forms an island off the coast of which Drapé 1, Stick 1, Stick 2 sails or maybe it flounders on the island's reef, for while the dusty surface is evocative, its identifying features remain ambiguous enough to denote either wilderness or paradise. The oversize Banderole, meanwhile, does not fly from a masthead but has returned from battle to hang in a grand curve like a cheap and cheerful candystriped coat of arms. In short, the artist has orchestrated a lyrical and assured sculptural composition in the space available to her, not only in terms of form but also in her delicate use of colour in combining weathered and manipulated elements. Luckily these works are strong enough not to need propping up by portentous French references; nor do these burden them. In fact, the works seem to shrug it all off. Rather than baffling the paradigm, Kacem reinvigorates it, and where is the harm in that?

Sonia Kacem
PROGRESS MI 07, 2011
(installation view). Courtesy
the artist and Galerie
Gregor Staiger, Zurich



#### **AOIFE ROSENMEYER**



Arnulf Rainer

Hugo Series, Untitled, 1998-9,
reproduction of Victor Hugo's

L'Ermitage, 1855, acrylic, pencil and
oil pastel, watercolour pencil on
laser print. Photo: Jean-Louis Losi,
© ADAGP, Paris 2011

Stephen Prina
(see Museum of Desires)

The Way He Always Wanted It II,
2008, 35mm film, colour, sound,
1.85:1, 27 min 19 sec, edition 1 of 7.
Courtesy Galerie Gisela Capitain,
Cologne. © the artist





Arnulf Rainer/Victor Hugo: Surpeintures Maison de Victor Hugo, Paris 6 October - 15 January

Often and hastily compared to the subversive Vienna Actionists at the beginning of his career, and previously known as the cofounder of the short-lived, provocative Dog Group (Hundsgruppe; during its one and only manifestation, in 1951, he insulted members of the public while verbally denouncing their 'rotten conception of art'), Austrian artist Arnulf Rainer later left body art behind and committed his destructive impulse to pictures. Since 1975 he's worked on the series Art on Art (Kunst auf Kunst) - which involves colouring in, scribbling on and scratching into printed reproductions of Old Masters' artworks that he has gleaned for years, either by photocopying, scanning or ripping them directly from books. Among the many artists who have triggered his obsessive 'overpainting' (übermalungen) are Rembrandt, Friedrich, Corot, Redon, Van Gogh and, last but not least, Victor Hugo, whose profuse yet dilettante practice of drawing (or 'daubing', as the French writer cautiously and coquettishly qualified it, because he had 'something else to do') has sparked over a hundred untitled übermalungen, all produced between 1998 and 2002. Half of them are shown at Maison de Victor Hugo along with, and therefore confronted by, their original sources for the first time, thanks to the meticulous research and archaeological eye of the museum conservators.

A rather expressionist or seemingly primitive intervention, which is aesthetically reminiscent of surrealist automatic writing and the 'outsider art' that Rainer has also been collecting for years, his overpaintings of Hugo's Romantic landscapes are not as iconoclastic as one might think. In fact, Rainer's graphic storms and colourful explosions over the writer's drawings magnificently complete the originals in a dialogue staged and displayed according to random and formal leitmotifs such as skylines

who, like the writer before him, remains secretive if not mute about his drawing process and techniques - the curators organised this show around the recurrences they could observe by default and over time during its preparation. Also, like Hugo's paperworks, the small formats of Rainer's overpaintings - determined by either the pages that were torn from books or the standardised A3 of printers - prove sublimely that the intensity of a gesture doesn't necessarily grow with scale.

In the interests of counterpoint, the exhibition ends with overpaintings taken from series focused on other artists, and here one realises that whereas, for example, Friedrich's reproductions have literally been trampled on (visible footprints) and Corot's figures furiously scraped off, Hugo may have inspired Rainer with more empathy than rage. In other words, the show allows Romantic ruins and modern(ist) tabula rasa to reflect each other with surprisingly graceful pertinence, without hurting one another in the least. On the contrary, the aura of Hugo's landscapes keeps on gifting the overpaintings with strength. The originals experience their enlargement and disfiguration without shame or loss, for somehow Rainer has managed to approach and recover their original state: for it was, it turns out, precisely through working with ink spills and coffee accidents that Hugo shaped his own picturesque universes.

#### **VIOLAINE BOUTET DE MONVEL**



Museum of Desires **MUMOK: Museum Moderner Kunst** Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna 10 September - 8 January

Every system can benefit from a cache-clearing restart. Founded in 1962, MUMOK recently celebrated a decade in Vienna's lively MuseumsQuartier complex. Rather than resting on its laurels, it got an overhaul - a new director, a new look, a relaunch of sorts. Karola Kraus, who took the institution's reins in late 2010, clearly considers this, her inaugural show, as marking a new beginning. But of what? An edgy curatorial and oblique lines. Indeed, in the absence of policy? A savvy business plan? Very possibly both. further communication with the artist himself - The exhibition contains works from the permanent

collection alongside 37 pieces that the museum would like to acquire, marked in silver exhibition plaques. "I want to not only fill in the gaps in the existing collection but also point to the museum's future collection", Kraus says.

The museum-wide exhibition starts on the fourth and uppermost floor with some usual suspects from the early-modern period - there's a Klee, a Picasso, a Kandinsky. Presenting about 200 of the collection's 9,000 pieces, the exhibition is rigorously curated and sparsely installed (especially compared to pre-Kraus exhibitions). This suggests the 'gaps' are larger than they actually are, but then the curatorial threads emerge. Loosely chronological as the viewer descends, the show generates tension and dialogues between eras, movements; between old and new, existing and unacquired. A Calder and a Mondrian from the collection meet a trio of geometric reliefs from 1961 by Polish avantgardist Henryk Stażewski, just one of the East European artists on the wish list. One floor down, Yves Klein's Monochrome Bleu (1961), Ellsworth Kelly's Blue Curve (1964) and Brice Marden's Thinking Blue (1969-70) have a blue party, crashed by Ad Reinhardt's Red Painting (1953). On level two, Louise Lawler's Plexi (Adjusted to Fit) (2010-11), a wish-list image of distorted product packaging on self-adhesive wallpaper, practically speaks to Warhol's Orange Car Crash (1963).

Some 'desires' were reportedly curated into the show as late as June, when Kraus went to Art Basel to scout the last of them. Mail art, Fluxus, Viennese Actionism and more are all represented; local stars Franz West and Heimo Zobernig appear as both collection pieces and hoped-for acquisitions. Newcomers like Polish artist Marzena Nowak are set against (much) bigger names - Nowak's trio of steel hula-hoops Ohne Titel (Hula Hoops) (2011) leaning against a wall (a €6,000 wish-list piece) meets Carl Andre's Five Segment Triangle (1976) on the floor. There's Ohne Titel (from the Fred the Frog series) (1989-90), by Martin Kippenberger, who is strangely not yet in MUMOK's permanent collection. The museum's lowest level is the most contemporary, where wish-list works like Cindy Sherman's Untitled #464 (2008), join collection works by VALIE EXPORT and Jeff Wall.

'Wish' exhibitions aren't a new idea - the Moderna Museet in Stockholm held its second in 2009. This one manages to ask for what it needs in a playful yet direct way, perhaps flouting Austrian institutional protocol but already seeing success: a Fred Sandback was quickly purchased by a patron and donated to MUMOK, others were financed via a benefit dinner (successful acquisitions each get a gold plaque). The show also makes a good effort at vaulting the museum into a more international sphere. Kraus's plan is to mount more large-scale monographic exhibitions: from a woman who obviously means business, that's something to look forward to.

#### KIMBERLY BRADLEY

# JARYN SIMON

Taryn Simon: A Living Man Declared Dead and Other Chapters Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin 22 September - 1 January

Bloodlines are the focus of American photographer Taryn Simon's project A Living Man Declared Dead and Other Chapters (2008-11). But what exactly does she understand by this far from risk-free concept, with its connotations of racism? Her show is billed as a documentation of 18 groups, each of which has suffered its own tragic fate - groups such as the victims of the genocide perpetrated against Bosnian Muslims in 1995, albinos in Tanzania murdered for their body parts and homosexuals in Spain persecuted by Franco's translated from the German by Fiona Elliott regime. Simon is generally presenting us with victims - and is interpreting 'bloodline' in the widest sense, from the connection through shared religious beliefs to skin colour to sexuality. And the object of her artistic enquiry is instances of what might be described as politically motivated mass murder. However, in an apparent effort to take this notion of racism to an absurd extreme, A Living Man Declared Dead and Other Chapters also includes the well-known story of rabbits illegally imported to Australia in 1859 and their subsequent slaughter.

Unfortunately this cynical comparison of the murder of men and the hunting of animals strips the content of Simon's concept of any real seriousness. Or might she have done this to turn our attention to the formal structure of her work?

The 'fates' of her subjects - dramatically, rather than critically, politicised by the artist are documented in high-quality triptychs. Solid wooden frames and generous amounts of glass give the images an auratic air, which is further reinforced in the Berlin presentation by the rather awe-inspiring nature of the displays in which the 'bloodlines' are set out. After all the cosy, very often noisily social-event-related relational crossovers of the 1990s, in the new millennium we are supposed to lapse back into silence in art exhibitions. On the left side of the triptychs are photographic portraits depicting the genealogy of the bloodline: starting with immediate predecessors, then the 'main person', followed the rigours of a pedagogical training grounded

based panel tells the story of each bloodline via a written narrative and picture captions. To the right of this is a final panel with photographs that serve as documentary 'footnotes' - in the case of said rabbits, for instance, an image of a mass grave of culled rabbits. Both the structure of the triptychs and the conventional nature of the image selection more or less conform to the practices of documentation with which we are already familiar from museums and other cultural institutions.

Naturally this aesthetic procedure is founded on a supposedly persuasive and seemingly theoretically grounded concept, for Simon has said that her work is about investigating the codes and structures underpinning these stories, about showing that they are all variations on archetypal sequences of past, present and future. However, this endeavour does not succeed, partly because the structure of A Living Man Declared Dead and Other Chapters merely apes other all-too-conventional modes of documentation, and partly because any such endeavour is highly questionable: what are these 'archetypal sequences' supposed to be? Sequences that are impervious to temporal, intellectual and technological change? Eternally the same and eternally valid?

#### RAIMAR STANGE



3 Countries 3 Artists Hadrien de Montferrand Gallery, Beijing 9 October - 4 December

**Against** the kind of concept-based curriculum cultivated in many Western schools, drawing on paper remains central to China's orthodox arteducation system. Contemporary artists recall by their offspring and descendants. A central text- in years of intensive life drawing, a medium that IONA WHITTAKER

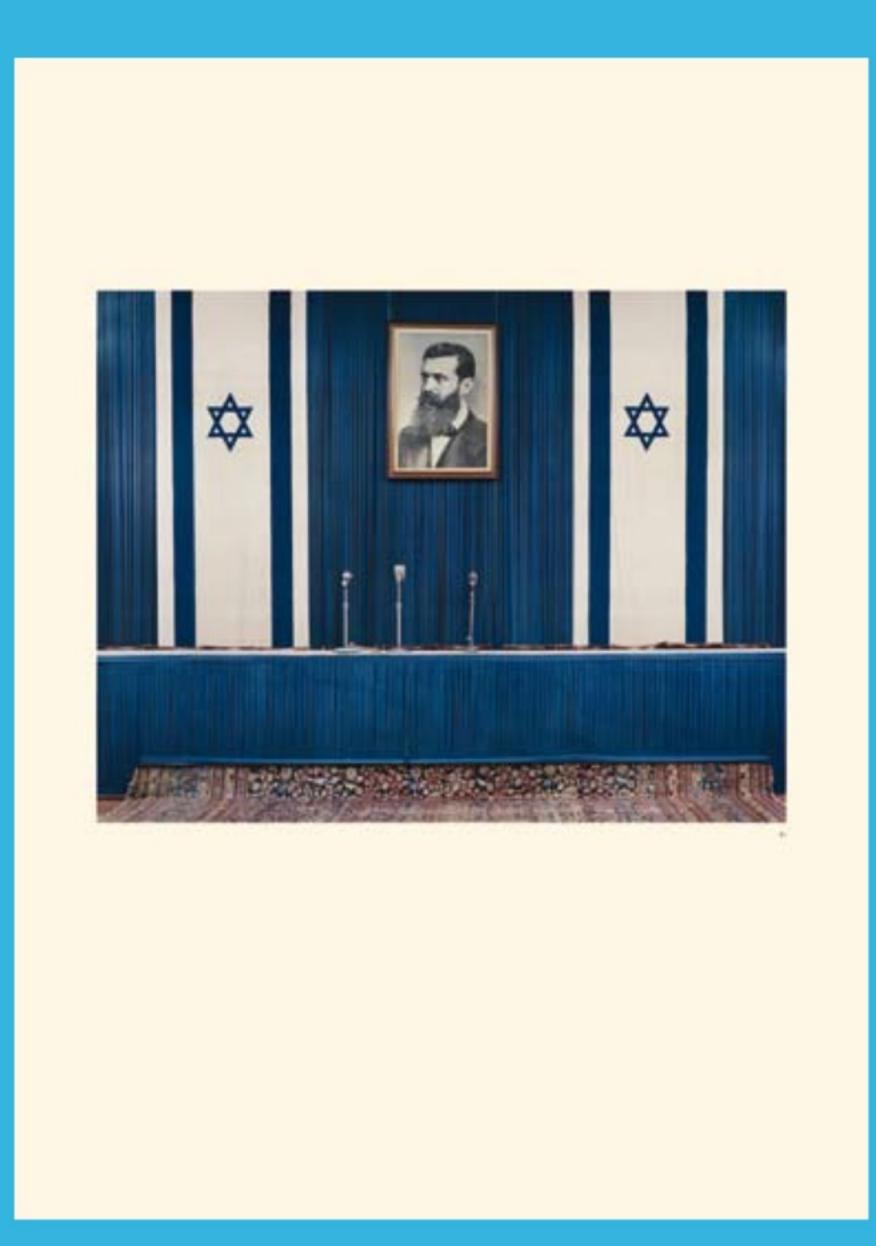
as a result may be identified more as an artistic foundation than a free form. Faced later with a factory-space art scene, the majority of Chinese artists opt for the 'bigger' media of installation and oil painting. But beyond the prescriptions of study, graphic work also entails important challenges: it constitutes the most direct of marks and often, on account of its moderate scale, the more intimate. The relationship with white negative space, too, signifies at once negotiation, acceptance and assertion by the image.

On display in Hadrien de Montferrand's suave rooms - Beijing's sole gallery devoted to works on paper - are those by three young artists: Fabien Mérelle (France), Shunsuke François Nanjo (Japan) and Sun Xun (China). Each finds his own way to inhabit the paper; Nanjo's Researching Possible Panoramas series (2011) is the most striking in this regard. Commonplace objects - cuboid shapes like crates seem to recur - have been drawn from life. Although rendered in heavy pencil and in such a way as to convey three dimensions, their positioning denies the delineation of fore, middle and background planes. Instead they float as solid forms minus graspable context, offset by abstract shards of colour or plain, straight graphic lines. Nanjo is interested in the concept of heterotopias - in Foucault's definition, spaces of 'otherness' that are at once physical and mental. These instances of objects, unbound by specific reference to place or time, are an apt conflation of possible physical and sensual residues in space.

Against Nanjo's a-spatiotemporal montages, Mérelle presents an intense series of small drawings in ink and watercolour. A sense of deep suppression is conveyed through the assiduous detail of these works, which illustrate a perverse childhood realm. La Bête (2011), for example, makes an intricate crab's head into an outcrop on which stands a miniature group of trees. Of particular note is Mélancolie No. 2 (2011), a heavy, sculpted white block lying on the floor of a dense pine forest. Its presence is echoed in a tiny, pure-white chink in the trees to the left: an ironic key, perhaps, to the blank paper beneath.

It is Sun Xun who comes off the weaker draughtsman in this group show. Drawings mainly in ink, charcoal and acrylic or pencil colour - which are the basis for his rich video animations are well stocked with imaginative energy, but seem crude in comparison with other recent outings by the artist. The decision to include the large-scale horizontal piece Clown's Revolution No. 4 (2010) is a case in point, though a narrative frieze in ink in the first room is strong.

3 Countries 3 Artists is thus a clean and engaging presentation of artworks under a simple premise. But beyond what it says on the tin, the exhibition is a subtle alert to the aesthetic - and very personal - potential of working on paper far surpassing mere grey marks on a white page.



**Taryn Simon**A Living Man Declared Dead and
Other Chapters (detail: excerpt
from chapter II), 2011. Courtesy
Gagosian Gallery, New York



Shunsuke François Nanjo
(see 3 Countries 3 Artists)
Researching Possible Panoramas
No. 6, 2011, ink and watercolour on
paper, 110 x 80 cm. Private Collection,
Beijing. Courtesy Hadrien de
Montferrand Gallery, Beijing

# On the Town



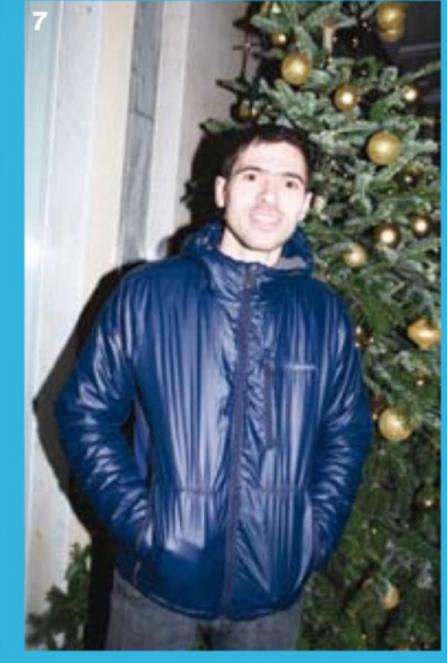




















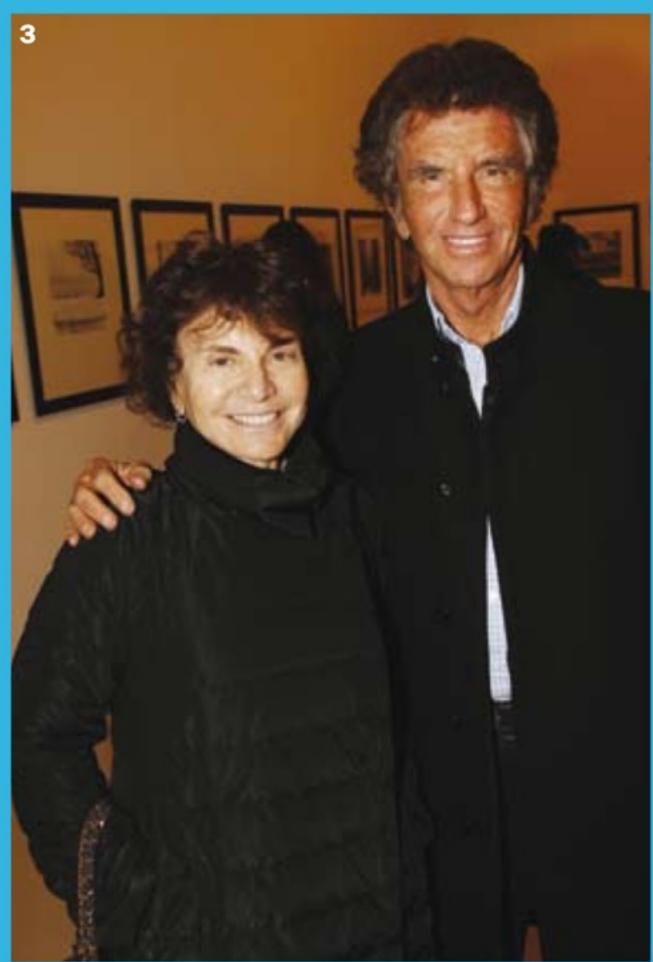
## PHILLIPS DE PURY & COMPANY SHOP LAUNCH, LONDON, 6 DECEMBER photography IAN PIERCE

1 David David's David Saunders 2 Designers Gemma Holt and Harry Thaler 3 Designer Faye Toogood 4 Design critic Johanna Agerman Ross and the Architecture Foundation's Sarah Ichioka 5 Designer Karin Peterson with Kaija, designer Markus Bergström 6 Gallerist Libby Sellers and designer Bethan Laura Wood 7 Designer Max Lamb 8 Phillips de Pury's Brent Dzekciorius and music scout Alban de Pury 9 Designer Eldina Begic and design critic Justin McGuirk 10 *The Guardian*'s Teri Grenert, David Saunders and design writer Henrietta Thompson 11 Libby Sellers, Johanna Agerman Ross, Front's Sofia Lagerkvist and Eldina Begic















## ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE CURATED BY SOFIA COPPOLA, GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC, PARIS, 25 NOVEMBER photography BERTRAND RINDORF

1 Musician Patti Smith, with Robert Mapplethorpe's Patti Smith (1978) 2 Socialite Lee Radziwill and fashion designer Giambattista Valli 3 Politician Jack Lang and wife Monique Buczynski 4 Thaddaeus Ropac and Sofia Coppola 5 Sofia Coppola and actor Stephen Dorff 6 Actress Amira Casar

## Books

JAN TUMLIR WRITES

MATTHEW BRANNON

#### Monograph

# Matthew Brannon: Hyenas Are...

By Jan Tumlir

Mousse Publishing, €26 (hardcover)

#### 'Why are people their own worst enemies?'

This is as good a question as any to ask, and it's the one that Jan Tumlir identifies as the central problem posed by Matthew Brannon's art in this sparkling, polished response to his work. Brannon is best known for his elegant letterpress prints, which the artist contrarily, or confidently, makes in editions of one. These are characterised by simple graphic images of lobsters, martini glasses, cigarettes, bottles of wine - 'adult pacifiers', as Tumlir puts it - and fruit bowls, steak knives, chessboards - 'the heraldry of the metropolitan subject'. The prints look neat, polite and New Yorker-ish, though the images are accompanied by despairing, often passive-aggressive fragments of text that mimic the effect of an advertisement or a movie poster: 'This year tell her you love her all over again. With a grab bag of diamonds. With mouthfuls of caviar.' Or: 'You keep the art. It's all shit anyway. I'll take the house.'

Tumlir creates a curiously absorbing narrative to this text, chiefly by describing the artist's work throughout as if it were a character – a technique that succeeds due to the strong sense of personality that the artist conveys in his works. His prints are 'suggestive of clean white shirts and dark-gray suits', though 'careful to allow for the occasional jaunty splash of primary color on the tie, pocket scarf, and/or socks'. He points out the 'lures' in Brannon's works –

Hyenas
Hre

Mousse Publishing

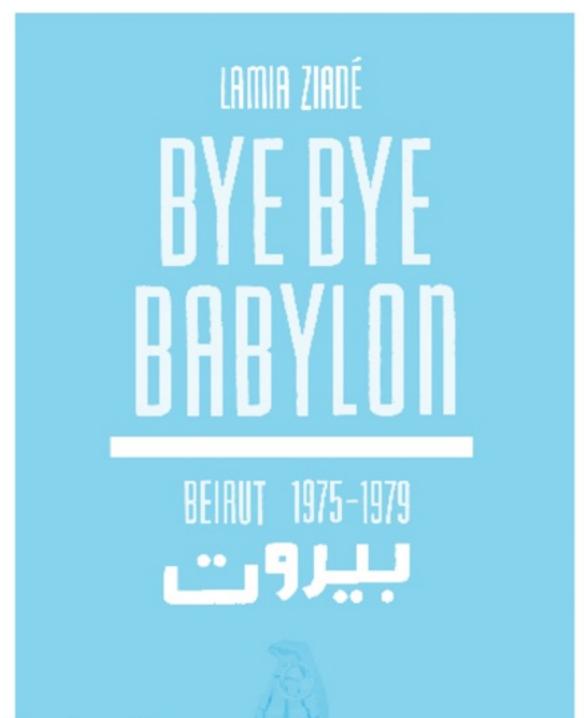
drawings of fish and eels, which mark the start of exhibitions – that 'greet the viewer gladly'; like generous hosts, they are attractive and appear to be perfectly genial. We are dropped clues and offered intriguing conversational fragments like so many titbits of gossip over cocktails. Indeed, if anything, Tumlir writes about Brannon as a Gatsby-like figure, fascinated by the double role the artist is able to play within his work – polite, charming and sexy, yet leaden with failure, guilt and nastiness.

But like Fitzgerald's famous character, Brannon has something to hide. He mocks the macho ridiculousness of painting – a letterpressed image of a Pollock-like drip (the action of neat and crisp-edged paper-pressing utterly antithetical to the languorous dripping and flicking of fluid) is accompanied by the words 'Yes. Yes. Fuck yes. Oh yes' etc – but that's because Brannon wants to paint too! He is quoted as miserably berating himself for being 'a grown man who makes things out of paper'. He recently turned to making paintings himself, however, with titles that appear to admit this love that previously dared not speak its name: Now you know and it doesn't change anything (2011).

Indeed, when it comes to desire, Tumlir writes that he hears that Brannon's work particularly appeals to women, and tries to prove this by looking at people of both genders looking at the work in photographs. 'It is largely a man's world that Brannon's work represents', writes Tumlir, 'and one still redolent of postwar machismo and misogyny. However, much like the television show *Mad Men* (which also appeals to women, incidentally) it is not only of, but also about, such things.' Brannon, Tumlir continues, makes the authority assumed by men one of his central subjects, and in drawing attention to this, forfeits the right to assume it himself.

Tumlir swims easily around the subjects in the artist's work: the thinning divide between reality and fantasy, and the crisp guiding hand of the market. And in doing so, he writes not only one of the best books about an artist that I have read this year, but one of the best books full stop. Brannon often displays closed stacks of publications in his exhibitions; the viewer is able to read none of them. But Tumlir tells us that they contain these words: 'I'm a very private person. I wouldn't ever confide in you. I wouldn't tell you a thing. This art is a sham.' If Brannon's art is a sham, however, what does that mean for those who look at it or read about it? Brannon's sham feelings are perhaps best conveyed in a reported episode in which the artist experiences a moment of panicked shame upon seeing hyenas at the Berlin Zoo looking out at him and laughing. These, then, are the hyenas of the title: they are a projection, the part of you that knows you are a sham and cackles hysterically as you try to greet and charm the world. The image of you being your own worst enemy.

#### **LAURA MCLEAN-FERRIS**



**Graphic Novel** 

## Bye Bye Babylon: Beirut 1975–1979

By Lamia Ziadé Jonathan Cape, £14.99 (softcover)

Bye Bye Babylon adds to the growing genre of autobiographical graphic novels about individuals who find themselves in politically charged situations. Originally published in French by Denoël Graphic (which also publishes cult international artists such as Robert Crumb and Alison Bechdel), it's an account of the early years of the bloody and chaotic Lebanese civil war - a difficult subject given the confusing number of factions involved and the torture and greed indulged in by all sides - as told through the eyes of a child whose stubbornly ideological parents refuse to leave Beirut. Like Marjane Satrapi in *Persepolis*, Ziadé impresses with her mix of bitter stoicism and bleak humour - evident in the stories of soldiers who exploit ceasefires to drink champagne from hotel bars and hire European Mafia to crack bank safes. Ziadé juxtaposes paragraphs of prose with cheerily coloured illustrations - more Ladybird book than comic. Indeed, her eclectic background in fashion, children's books and erotic fiction is manifested in the ease with which she switches registers, from graphic depictions of dismembered body parts to black-andwhite imagined scenes of sleazy adult behaviour and technicolour depictions of favourite childhood treats, emphasising the disturbing gulf between the horror of the conflict and her sugarcoated memories of glamorous, decadent Beirut before the war.

JENNIFER THATCHER

**Artist Book** 

# The Speech Writer

By Bani Abidi Raking Leaves, £23 (10 flipbooks in hardcover case)

The Speech Writer is a beautifully observed portrait of a disillusioned speechwriter (played by an actor) in the form of 10 double-sided flipbooks. Each tiny book operates as an episode in a film (the books come elegantly boxed with instructions on how to sequence the books into a 'film') documenting the travails of the elderly central character, who has written the speeches for a powerful politician with whom he has subsequently become disillusioned. Pakistan-born Abidi has said that the work is an allegory for a generation of postcolonial intellectuals from countries across South Asia 'who opted to work within the system and devote their lives to institutions and to various forms of "nation building" and who 'eventually slipped into marginal invisible spaces', having lost hope. 'I wrote for them and thought for them for so many years... but to what use? These were just words for them', reads one of the eight typewritten conversational fragments reproduced on the box's primrose-yellow cover (alongside the corresponding timecode). The camera follows the speechwriter as he shows us around his space, pulling out old files, pouring tea and rummaging through his once-smart suits. He appears to be reading something throughout - the speeches he has written, which are being broadcast via loudspeaker to the street beyond. 'These are some of my best pieces', he says according to one of the fragments on the cover. 'They were never used... I was told that they spoke of more than was needed.' The fact that the flipbook format depicts speech but is silent only emphasises the way in which the speechwriter has been increasingly suffocated and muffled.

LAURA MCLEAN-FERRIS



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Running through this well-informed, pragmatic analysis of how the economic ascendancy of China, India and the Middle East will affect the artworld's international dynamics is a preoccupation with the resurgence of market interest in aesthetic and cultural tradition in these new markets. Robertson counterposes what he calls 'international contemporary art' - meaning the postmodern art that is the legacy of Western Modernism - with the revival of 'ground-roots', 'indigenous' art cultures that draw on the richness and depth of the millennia-old histories of the civilisations Robertson classifies as the East Asian democracies, Greater China, the Persianate world (Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan) and Hindustan (India).

So A New Art from Emerging Markets is really focused on art that is deeply committed to old art, to the continuity or revival of aesthetic and technical traditions that predate the cultural influence of the West: for example, ink and brush in China, calligraphy and illumination in Chinese and Persianate art, and the revisiting of the Bengal School among Indian artists. 'Societies as large and influential as China's and India's', writes Robertson, 'are today declaring their cultural independence from the international art

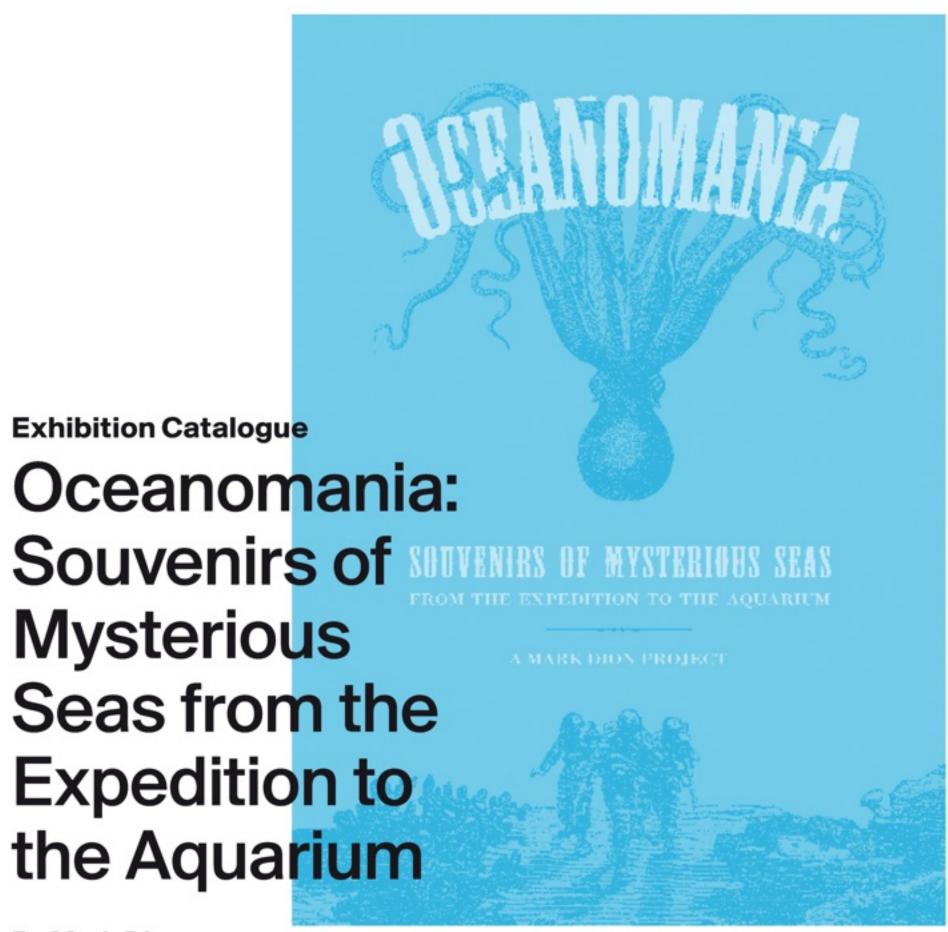
market'. Robertson is consistently critical of what he sees as the illegitimate and artificial influence of 'international contemporary art', viewing it as a product of the period of the West's economic and political dominance; and at the same time, he is broadly appreciative of the 'authentic' character of cultural production rooted in tradition and continuity. 'The international art market certainly threatens the judgements of taste that are often, in the parts of the world that we are examining, intuitive and second nature', argues Robertson, continuing with the withering assertion that the same market 'also denudes a culture of its variety and gives rise to a formulaic cultural Esperanto which speaks only to institutionalised cultural apparatchiks'.

Robertson certainly has the economic figures to back up his analysis of the return-totradition in markets like China, citing figures that show that 'over three-quarters of the domestic Chinese art market is made of calligraphy and works on paper', for example. But rather than merely observing the emerging tastes of the emerging classes of wealthy art collectors, Robertson is keen to celebrate traditionalist revivals as a cultural riposte to the bogeyman of 'Westernisation'. The core problem with Robertson's conflation of cultural relations and economic relations is that it rules out any form of cultural internationalism and exchange as merely an effect of the pernicious, Westerndominated 'international art market'. This means that Robertson has to gloss over those instances where 'Eastern' artists have had substantial and mutual exchanges with 'Western' artistic cultures; he fails to note the important time artists such as Ai Weiwei or Hiroshi Sugimoto have spent in New

York, for example. When it comes to India, Robertson finds it hard to square his support for 'indigenous' practice with the way in which contemporary Indian artists have productively assimilated and retooled 'Western' postminimalist tropes – at one point he bizarrely refers to Bharti Kher (who was born and educated in England) as 'what is known as a conceptual artist', as if this were some kind of exotic phenomenon he had only just discovered.

Of course at one level Robertson's analysis makes sense: as the newly prospering societies of the East begin to develop affluent art-collecting classes, their cultural backgrounds will tend to influence their art choices; and if those (largely authoritarian) governments are keen to promote cultural nationalism as a political strategy, then neoparochial forms of practice will be a likely outcome. But Robertson's fascination with 'indigenous' and traditionalist continuity misses the point that such cultural 'authenticity' is as much a manufactured cultural phenomenon as the supposedly rootless 'international' art he decries, a phenomenon nurtured by political and cultural elites to limit international dialogue in the name of national identity. (This isn't limited to the 'East', of course - the convenient resurgence of nostalgic images of 'Britishness' in contemporary British culture, for example, suggest that it is a widespread reaction.) This is, ironically, what makes Robertson's approach profoundly postmodern and antihistorical: with experimental, future-oriented, antitraditionalist energy that once characterised the culture of Western modernity largely exhausted, economic progress in the East can go hand-in-hand with cultural conservatism, as autocratic regimes attempt to ignore the demands of their populations for greater democratisation and freedom of expression (a tendency the West seems, dismally, to be echoing). But cultural conformism and orthodoxy are what lie behind the mask of 'timeless' 'indigenous' cultural tradition; accepting it can only constrain art's speculative, creative disruption, and finally play into the hands of the status quo.

#### J.J. CHARLESWORTH



By Mark Dion Nouveau Musée National de Monaco/ Mack, £45/€50/\$70 (hardcover)

The design of this catalogue, documenting a group exhibition curated by Mark Dion last summer and spread across the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco and the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, is a lavish, gilt-edged affair stuffed full of illustrations and essays. Consequently it's a rich - if sometimes disorienting replication of the exhibition it surveys. Dion staged a vastly expanded take on the 'cabinet of curiosities', displaying oceanographic specimens (fossilised sea animals, taxidermy polar bears, Victorian diving apparatuses among them) and natural history illustrations from the museums' collections alongside contemporary works such as Katharina Fritsch's orange sculpture Octopus (2006/9) and Allan Sekula's 2006 film Lottery of the Sea: Prologue and Ending. In publication form, the collected images and texts appear to consider historical attempts to 'civilise' the seeming disorder of the natural world. One of the texts, by historian Celeste Olalquiaga, investigates the figure of Captain Nemo, found in Jules Verne's novels Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea (1870) and The Mysterious Island (1874). It's easy to see Dion playing the Nemo role: a man immersing himself in a strange world like a colonial explorer, but taking with him - as Nemo did in his submarine - familiar artefacts from his own world.

#### **OLIVER BASCIANO**

#### **Theory**

## **Critical Dictionary**

Edited by David Evans
Black Dog Publishing, £19.95 (softcover)

'Spittle', 'Nightingale' and 'Debacle' are among the subjects covered in 'Critical Dictionary', a regular feature in the Georges Bataille-edited journal Documents (1929-30). Notable for their wild, bounding leaps away from the subject in question, the entries attempted to undo certain structures of thinking by bringing overlooked, peripheral subjects into play. This investigation of the 'underbelly' of standard definitions is the basis for a new publication entitled Critical Dictionary, a collection from website criticaldictionary.com, which is overseen by David Evans, though it might also be considered a kind of collection of 'offcuts' from Evans's other research interests (he edited the Whitechapel Documents essay collection Appropriation, for example, and has published widely on photography). The notion of the historical antidictionary format doesn't seem to hold, however, other than as a way to provide titles for short entries and artistic contributions. Evans's entry on 'Error', for example is a brief, insightful appraisal of the photographic mistake; 'Jewellery' is an interview with an expert on gems and luxury, and 'Comm(e)unism' is a Comme des Garçons fashion shoot in a bleak landscape in Georgia in 1989/90 at a tense political moment. Rosalind Krauss & Yve-Alain Bois's Formless: A User's Guide (1997) also deployed Bataille's dictionary format: a formless structure to investigate aspects of formlessness. Here, however, I can't quite understand what the reference to 'Critical Dictionary' does for the collection other than to provide a historical premise for tying together loose



**Exhibition Catalogue** 

## Design Research Unit, 1942–72

By Michelle Cotton

Koenig Books, £16.95 (softcover)

Set up in 1943, the Design Research Unit (DRU) was one of the first British consultancies to attempt to bring together expertise in what had previously been considered discrete media: architecture, graphics and industrial design. As the Second World War came to a close, the group proclaimed that the age of the machine had arrived, and along with it the potential mass production of literally everything. And if these newfangled technologies were going to be used to rebuild the world in the postwar era, then the DRU would jolly well be there to save industrially produced products from the twin threats of 'ugliness and aesthetic emptiness' that were, apparently, the two qualities most popularly associated with modern industry. Only if art and industry are united can we have 'progress' and 'civilisation' the group declared. Huzzah!

Born of a dialogue about the scale and needs of the postwar reconstruction (or in business terms, 'the opportunity') between anarchist art-critic Herbert Read and ad man Marcus Brumwell, the DRU was formed in association with architect Misha Black and industrial designer Milner Gray, both of whom had been working in the wartime government's Ministry of Information. The present book is a catalogue that accompanies a touring exhibition curated by the author during her tenure at London's Cubitt gallery and documenting three decades of DRU output, including contributions to the 1951 Festival of Britain, brand identities for British Rail, the Watneys and Courage breweries, and a car created by Naum Gabo.

That matters of 'ugliness' and 'aesthetic emptiness' are subject both to fashion and to the occasionally whimsical thinking out of which subjective opinion is formed is something that the DRU's pronouncements and this book tend to gloss over. In his hugely influential publication Art and Industry (1934), Read had wholeheartedly embraced the latest thinking of the Bauhaus School: 'I have no desire in this book other than to support and propagate the ideals... expressed by Dr Gropius', he wrote in the introduction. By the 1960s, the DRU was struggling to come to terms with the latest design movement: Pop. While a sizeable chunk of their income came from Pop designs by Ken Lamble (most famously for Ilford cameras), these very designs were the most frequently attacked in the DRU's regular self-criticism sessions. For design critics such as

\*The machine is accepted as the essentially modern vehicle of form. Our designs will therefore be essentially designs for mass production, but at the same time we hope to rescue mass production from the ugliness and aesthetic emptiness which has so far characterized the greater part of its output. It is impossible to accept the view that any essential antagonism exists between art and industry, between beauty and the machine. But it is necessary to reintegrate the worlds of art and industry, for only on that basis can we progress towards a new and vital civilization.

Design Research Unit 1942-72 Reyner Banham, what such arguments revealed was 'a crisis of orientation': on the one hand 'good' design had traditionally been created/ dictated by privileged and highly educated architects (like Gropius); on the other hand, the rise of Pop was, for Banham at least, tied to the rise of universal education. While Cotton concedes that there were differences between older and younger members of the DRU (which Banham, in his critique of the DRU, likened to combat between Prosperos and Calibans), a true analysis of those differences is, perhaps a little sadly, beyond the scope of Cotton's study.

Instead what we're presented with is essentially a potted history of the group alongside a series of greatest hits. What those projects mark is the beginnings of big branding in Britain and the gradual supremacy of design and marketing imagery over product, something that's most evident during the mid-1960s, when the DRU was working on the trains: 'British Railways needs a new look to stimulate a new faith in the national service it performs', read the brief from that company. While creating everything from menus to seat coverings, the DRU took the 'ways' out of British Railways; while designing everything from beer taps to beer mats, the DRU took the apostrophe out of Watney's. But when the products and services provided by each institution began to decline, the savings they'd made on lettering didn't save the companies. Between 1956 and 1970, the DRU made Watneys's pubs and beers some of the most recognisable in Britain, but when the brewery began to market cheaper, inferior products during the early 1970s, it declined, was taken over and now ceases to exist. Similarly, although the British Rail rebranding was a success and its DRU-designed logo survives to this day, thanks to repeated government mismanagement and eventual privatisation the 'new faith' BR had hoped to attach to that logo does not. As Thomas Aquinas once said, 'Faith has to do with things that are not seen'.

If there is an echo of Beauty and the Beast about the DRU's agenda (ugly but immensely practical industry meets beautiful art and is transformed into the kind of handsome prince with whom everyone will want to live happily and comfortably every after) and about some of its projects - Black's early proposal for the Festival of Britain: a glass tower in which circulation would occur thanks to self-propelled boats and a spiral waterway; and for those who needed to descend from the top levels in a hurry, helicopter and parachute - that's because the creation of such tales was what it thrived on. Not least when it came to the image of the DRU itself and a name that allowed it to cast itself as an experimental laboratory working 'not solely for financial gain'. A book worth reading, then, if you want an insight into the world of fairytales that's crashing down around us today.

#### **MARK RAPPOLT**

#### Monograph **Blind**

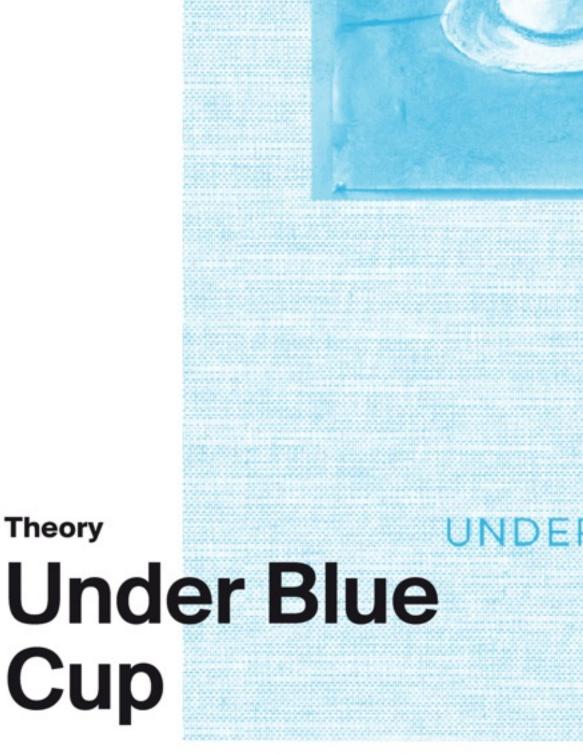
By Sophie Calle Actes Sud, €85 (hardcover)

This monograph contains three projects by Calle that operate around blind people, spanning a timeframe of 1986 to 2010. All texts (originally in French) are presented in English and Braille, and bar the matter-of-fact introductions Calle provides for her performative, investigative projects, are first-person accounts by her subjects. In The Blind (1986), Calle asked various people born blind what their image of 'beauty' was. The answers, overflowing with pathos and printed here (a boy asserts, for example: 'Green is beautiful. Because every time I like something, I'm told it's green') are accompanied by photographs of the interviewees and images illustrating their answers. In Blind Color (1991), Calle compared the descriptions by blind people of what they 'see' to various texts on monochrome paintings; it proves very hard to differentiate between the two. The Last Image (2010) involves speaking to people who went blind in later life, asking them to describe the last image they remember seeing. One man, a former taxi driver, responds by describing the face of the man who shot him. For the reader, these encounters - across all three projects are insightful, building small bridges across the perceived gulf between those in the world of images and those who live without them.

Sophie Calle



Blind



Rosalind E. Krauss

**Theory** 

MIT Press, \$24.95/£16.95 (hardcover)

In 1999 Rosalind Krauss suffered an aneurysm, 'an exploded artery launching a cataract of blood into the brain'. Her recuperative treatment, aimed at restoring the estimable American critic's shattered recall - initially by reminding her of who she was - involved flashcards bearing disconnected scraps of texts or images: one of these read 'under blue cup'. But Under Blue Cup, a brief, fiery book organised via the would-be mnemonic device of brief textual sections with alphabetised subheaders ('Aneurysm', 'Brain', 'Chessboard', etc) is not a therapy memoir. Critical to her fingertips, Krauss evidently found a focus in the necessity of remembering what was, for her, a 'decade of disgust at the spectacle of meretricious art called installation', which she equates with the postmedium condition and summarises, here, via a recounted trip to Documenta X in 1997 in which virtually everything is, in her eyes, a footnote to Duchamp. For Krauss, postmedium art is predicated on amnesia - a forgetting of how to create visual pleasure by working with (and against) historically defined contours - whereas mediums relate to memory: 'the scaffolding for a "who you are" in the collective memory of the practitioners of that particular genre'. Krauss believes, though, that traditional media (painting, sculpture, photography, film) are all but exhausted. So Under Blue Cup, in defending medium per se, enlists a group of 'knights of the medium', 'defenders of

specificity' who have invented new 'technical supports' - new sets of rules to work within, just as the chessboard, or the chordal progressions within the tempered scale that Bach improvised upon in his fugues (Krauss's own examples), serve as enablers of creativity. Among these courtly mediums: Ed Ruscha's use of the automobile, Sophie Calle's deployment of investigative journalism, Christian Marclay's pseudocinematic leveraging of synchronous sound, and James Coleman's use of PowerPoint-like slide/tape presentations.

Several things are going on at once here. Critical psychodynamics are in play, since Krauss is, once again, distinguishing her approach from Clement Greenberg's medium-specificity while not wholly breaking with it. She's shoring up her own achievements: I got 17 pages into this book before the unwritten phrase 'medium in the expanded field' - a twist on Krauss's seminal 1979 essay 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field' - crossed my mind, and sure enough, she closes Under Blue Cup by staking a claim to this concept. And she's working with a structure - medium versus postmedium - big enough to turn the whole field of contemporary art into a binary, if not a war. Krauss is clearly energised by this: the section on Documenta, in which she mockingly calls curator Catherine David 'Kha-tee' and imagines her researching the show in a state of utter confusion, has a furious energy that most critical writing doesn't get near. Indeed, the whole book has a high-wire feel to it, from Krauss's risky decision to draw a critical approach from the circumstances of her own life onwards.

And yet Under Blue Cup doesn't convince; it is, indeed, a victim of its own binarism. As much as Krauss sees David turning a blind eye to aesthetic properties - latching only onto social meanings - Krauss won't countenance that artworks are polyvalent, generating interplays between how they look and what they intend to signify, and that medium-specificity might not be the whole story. Considering Coleman's work INITIALS (1993-4), against an idea that the human (and, in this case, Irish) subject is socially constructed in the process of learning, she writes, 'I refuse to embrace the Irish identitarian reading as accounting for this work's considerable power', asserting that much of its value lies, rather, in how the voicing of letters in the voiceover corresponds to the click of the slide projector. Under Blue Cup is full of this kind of wilful blinkering, and it leaves one with mixed feelings: thrilled by the acidic vivacity of Krauss's writing (and, of course, glad of her recovery), but wishing that her tweaked formalism didn't feel like a selfservingly contrarian pose - or worse, the crabbiness of a critic who no longer understands the stakes of contemporary art.

#### MARTIN HERBERT

Subject: off the record

Date: Sunday, December 11, 2011 11:11
From: gallerygirl@artreview.com
To: <office@artreview.com>
Conversation: off the record

My New Year's Eve gatherings are now something of an event in London's social calendar. Taking my cue from ex-con and popular novelist Jeffrey Archer's famous soirées, we serve shepherd's pie and champagne, and invite the coming men and women of the beautiful, shiny artworld along with a sprinkling of thinkers and creatives. Last year my team of unpaid interns, all scions of high-networth families, helped me send out the Smythson 'At Home' cards to a glittering invitation list. The international gathering of celebrities included Tracey Emin, Saif Gaddafi, Adele, Gregor Muir, Ed Vaizey and Zhang Xiaogang. A highlight for me was watching in awe as mischievous Adam Werritty, the dearly missed nonofficial adviser to our minister of defence, powwowed with one of London's leading collectors before flourishing a bulging brown envelope and singing *Auld Lang Syne*.

This year I mulled over the invite list with my lifestyle coach and former German goalkeeper Jens Lehmann at Bar 45 above Wolfgang Puck's Park Lane steakhouse, Cut.

"So, Jens, who in the artworld embodies what 2012 will be about?"

Jens looked back at me over the Cire Trudon 'Abd el Kader' scented candle. "You mean artworld people who symbolise the core values of rethinking how the world might become a fairer place for all?"

"Exactly. Take the few farsighted collectors who have selflessly sold off one of their beautiful Jacob Kassay paintings, each time at a surprisingly higher price and reenforcing the value of his work. It illustrates wonderfully how we might all grow our way out of this financial black hole. These brave heroes show the daring entrepreneurial spirit that will stimulate the economic growth the Western world craves."

"Jah!" affirmed Jens. "Or the mesmerisingly intelligent experts at auction houses who have sweated blood prising the Kassays away from the collectors with their brilliant argument that trading a Kassay is one step better than trading credit default swaps in the noble pursuit of wealth creation."

"Or the farsighted commercial dealers who know that it is better for the global economy to forget about so-called placing of work and instead sell them to hedge-fund guys who will flip them within 18 months and thus create inward investment," I bellowed back.

Jens put down his glass and stared unnervingly at my Alice + Olivia sequined stretch-mesh top. "I shall put together the invite list at once."

The waiter wordlessly brought over a Machu Peach-Chu for me and a Pepino's Revenge for Jens. As I relaxed back into the Studio Alchimia Proust Chair that I had especially arranged to be at my favourite table, I caught the waiter's eye for a moment, and in it I glimpsed a terrible melancholy in his aged Spanish eyes.

"But Jens. Stop. Let us think. What kind of artworld is this that we live in? A world where we are in thrall to precisely the type of profit-fixated, amoral, greedy financiers that have brought Europe to its knees?"

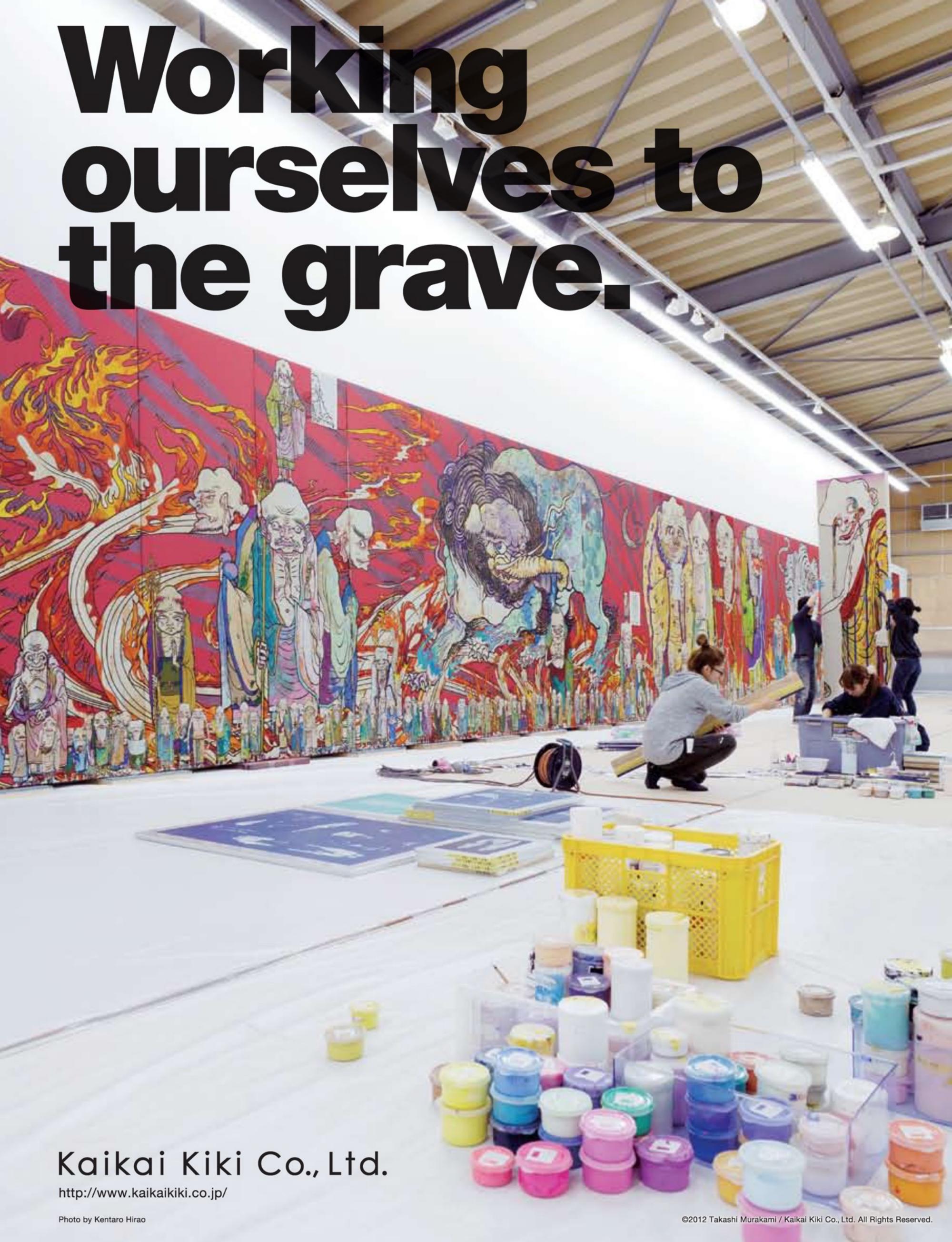
"You mean the type of speculator to whom art is just another unregulated market with pleasant suppers thrown in?" growled Jens, rolling up the sleeves of his Alexander McQueen lightweight shawl collar sweater.

"Precisely, Jens. We live in a world where even once-worthy not-for-profit spaces are reduced to pleading with former derivatives traders to sign up to their benefactor schemes."

"Das ist korrekt, GG. It is a world whose response to Greece going up in flames and dragging Europe into economic meltdown was to spend the summer partying on Hydra with Dakis Joannou."

"A world where Marina Abramovic stages a fundraiser for Jeffrey Deitch's LA MOCA that involves making young female performers lie naked under plastic skeletons or do a spooky revolving-head-as-lazy-Susan thing for the delectation of salivating patrons and funders," I continued. "Just think, a fundraising event that managed to reduce the once-subversive medium of performance art to the spectacle of young art-girls served up like naked dancing bears to gawping bankers. An event that climaxed in the mixture of celebrities and financiers baying for slices of cake shaped like mutilated female bodies while reaching for their chequebooks. An event that Yvonne Rainer described as demonstrating 'the pervasive desperation and cynicism of the art world'. An event where the few lone voices – such as Thomas Houseago, who rightly yelled, 'This is shit, not art' – were hushed and hustled out. What sort of world is this, Jens?"

Jens looked ill. "Fuck. How do we top that? Shepherd's pie again?"





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